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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-187 *27 September 1994*

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Rabin Told 'Arafat Trying To Amend Covenant

TA2609115094 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 26 Sep 94 p 1

[Report by Moti Bassok]

[Excerpts] "We are trying to convene the Palestine National Council in order to revoke the anti-Israeli clauses in the Palestinian Covenant. We are preparing for that." This was what PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat told Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at their meeting at the Erez checkpoint yesterday.

In the meeting it was agreed that next Monday in Cairo the Palestinians and Israel would start negotiations on the implementation of the next stage in the Declaration of Principles and the Cairo Agreement, which deals with holding general and democratic elections in the territories and redeploying IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in the West Bank outside of Palestinian population centers. [passage omitted]

The two men also agreed to meet at the Erez checkpoint on a monthly basis and to hold regular working discussions in which they would attempt to resolve any problems that were not worked out in Cairo.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew in a page A1 pool report adds that "apparently Israel's demand to interrogate Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Palestinian security service in Jericho, would also be discussed by the joint security committee."]

Envoy on Progress at Bilaterals, Postponement

JN2609202494 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Telephone interview with Ambassador to the U.S. Fayiz al-Tarawinah, head of the Jordanian delegation to the bilateral talks with Israel, in Washington, by Suhayl Khuri; place and date not given—live]

[Text] [Khuri] Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah: What is the state of negotiations regarding the border issue, and is it true that major progress was made during the past few days?

[Al-Tarawinah] Brother Suhayl, as you know, we agreed two months ago that sessions would be held on 12, 13, 28, and 29 September. We held the 12 and 13 September sessions. We found it useless to hold the 28 and 29 September sessions because the heads of the two delegations are preoccupied, as I am now staying in Washington, and as his Royal Highness [Crown Prince Hasan] is expected to arrive in New York. Therefore, the meeting was postponed. As has been agreed previously, the major round of talks will take place from 10-20 October. In fact, I said after the Tiberias round of negotiations on 13 September that we had been able to achieve progress and to bridge the gap regarding an outstanding technical point pertaining to water, border, and territory issues. There were technical committees working on the border demarcation.

I would like to reaffirm what I have said on several occasions that progress is being made through both sides' commitment to the contents of the joint agenda and the subagendas regarding water, borders, and territories and to the spirit of the Washington Declaration that stress these basic points in the negotiating process. These issues are noncontroversial but need technicalities. Therefore, I can say that we are on the right track and in the direction for which are aspiring, God willing.

The question remains: When will we finish these matters? This is related to the extent of progress made on these technicalities, including the definition of borders, the joint maps, the demarcation process, and the water issue. However, we are going in the right direction. We are moving in a clear way and in accordance with the documents, which we have and which are binding for both sides.

[Khuri] Thank you Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah.

[Al-Tarawinah] You are welcome, brother.

Al-Husayni on Prospects for Poll Participation

MM2609125194 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Sep 94 p 2

[Interview with Faysal al-Husayni, Palestinian official in charge of Orient House in Jerusalem, by Sawsan Abu-Husayn in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] [Abu-Husayn] Why have the measures for the early transfer of power not been implemented yet?

[Al-Husayni] There are no problems in the agreement of the early transfer of power itself, and it is supposed to cover five aspects, but the Israel authorities treat the matter as if it is a Palestinian demand, ignoring the provisions of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. It is regrettable. We were supposed to complete all the Gaza-Jericho agreement measures first to make way for the West Bank phase to start, but Israel is procrastinating on implementation. So far it has only given the [Palestinian] National Authority [PNA] the tasks of the education sector in the West Bank. We are supposed to be about to take over the health sector.

[Abu-Husayn] What is preventing the redeployment of the Israeli Army in the West Bank to pave the way for the elections?

[Al-Husayni] That is supposed to take place. We hope that the Israeli forces will withdraw from the densely populated areas, but we see Israel placing obstacles in the way of the elections so as to prolong the withdrawal period. So far it has been refusing to redeploy and withdraw from the election areas.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you believe that the opposition factions will participate in the elections?

[Al-Husayni] That is open to them and they are prepared to participate in the local council elections, but they have

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not made a decision yet about participation in the political elections which, according to the agreement, will be held in the final stage.

[Abu-Husayn] Has Israel agreed to the return of some of the leaders of these factions?

[Al-Husayni] Some members of George Habash's Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine], PFLP, have decided to return and they will take part, but others have refused. They are free to do what they want.

[Abu-Husayn] Why has Jerusalem been excluded from the development plan linked to the aid for the "Gaza-Jericho first" agreement?

[Al-Husayni] The current development plan is a PNA plan for the Gaza and Jericho areas. Israel's excuse on this point is that Jerusalem is not a part of these areas and, therefore, its case has been postponed. We have tried to interpret the aid as being aid for the Palestinian people inside [the occupied territories] including Jerusalem, Gaza, and Jericho. We again urge support for and interest in the cause of Jerusalem and we believe that there should be an Arab-Islamic strategy for the Jerusalem battle.

[Abu-Husayn] The Islamic summit conference scheduled to be held in Morocco will discuss the Jerusalem issue. Have you prepared a special working paper for that occasion?

[Al-Husayni] There are Palestinian ideas about development prospects as being a joint Palestinian-Arab venture. We will discuss full details before the Islamic summit.

[Abu-Husayn] Regarding Orient House in Jerusalem. Why has there been no specific plan of action for its protection from repeated Israeli aggressions?

[Al-Husayni] The extremists have not stopped plotting such aggression. Israeli cells which plot assassination of some figures or guards from time to time are being continuously uncovered and captured. As known, Israel views Orient House extremely seriously and sees it as a significant Palestinian achievement because it manifests the desire to establish a Palestinian state.

Progress in Talks Seen Boosting Syrian Track

MM2609132394 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Sep 94 p 2

[Interview with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Sat'an al-Hasan by 'Abd-al-Majid al-Yahyawi in Brussels; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Al-Yahyawi] What is the significance of your visit to the capital of the European Union [EU]?

[Al-Hasan] My visit to Brussels is in the context of the continuous consultation and cooperation between Jordan and the EU. [passage omitted]

[Al-Yahyawi] What about the tour by Dennis Ross, the U.S. Middle East coordinator, and what are the new U.S. ideas for resolving the problems on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Al-Hasan] The United States, as one of the sponsors of the Madrid conference and the entire peace process, plays an essential role as a full partner and impartial mediator. It plays an effective part, and it is our duty to seek to develop that role even further. The U.S. coordinator's tour of the region is in itself a boost for the peace process and it mirrors the U.S. sponsor's interest in giving the peace process the priority it deserves.

We are confident that the United States is playing that part and that it keeps the peace process and the Middle East question at the top of U.S. priorities in the region. So we welcome the visit and hope that it produces the positive results we all aspire to on all the Arab tracks. [passage omitted]

[Al-Yahyawi] Can the Arab-Israeli peace process make progress if the Syrian track is in jeopardy?

[Al-Hasan] We believe that the progress made on the Jordanian-Israeli track is a boost for the peace process. It is a sufficient impetus for movement on all other tracks. We have always maintained that each track has its own special characteristics and that movement cannot be simultaneous on all tracks, but we are agreed on the principle of comprehensiveness. We still emphasize or insist on that principle on the grounds that peace is an indivisible whole, and, therefore, any progress on any track constitutes a boost for the other tracks. We believe that the development that has occurred on the Jordanian track constitutes real impetus for the other Arab tracks. [passage omitted]

Israeli, PLO Officials Discuss Peace Process

BR2309143894 Brussels KNACK in Dutch 21 Sep 94 pp 124-128

[Interview with Leila Shahid, PLO representative to France, and Israeli Communnication and Culture Minister Shulamit Aloni by Sus van Elzen, in Brussels; date not given: "The Price of Peace"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Van Elzen] One year after the signature of the Declaration of Principles a lot has indeed happened, but you are pressed for time.

[Aloni] The Israelis are not as pressed for time as the Palestinians. I think we are not generous enough. They have delays, and we are making things difficult for them. We have a delay in the issues concerning Syria and Jordan and other countries, but we do not have the feeling that we are going too slowly with the Palestinians. On the contrary: All too many Israelis would like to slow the process down further. I think we should be generous and offer them more aid—and not just us, but also all those countries which have put Israel under such great pressure to recognize Palestine and the rights of the

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Palestinians and have us withdraw. After 27 years of occupation they are in a very bad way. Now they have to build up their whole lives. At the pace things are going now, it is too slow.

[Shahid] I think that both sides have wasted time, especially in the beginning, with our negotiations for the application of the agreement. The withdrawal from the occupied territories, which was supposed to begin on 13 December, actually began three months late. That is why we are now facing a three-month delay in our elections. Normally, they should have taken place on 13 July. The timetable was very ambitious, was it not? Signed on 13 September, entered into force on 13 October, withdrawal beginning on 13 December, and elections for the Palestinian Council on 13 July. We are three months behind this schedule, i.e., Israel's application of the accords. That is not good. On the Palestinian side we are facing a delay in the setting up of our institutions, because the money that was given by the international community as aid has to be absorbed by institutions which must, at the very least, be able to meet the immediate requirements of the people, namely the creation of jobs.

Sure, there must be a feeling of relief, but that will come as the people see—little by little, inch by inch—that things are going better day by day. Unemployment is, in this respect, of the utmost importance. Gaza, which is the largest center in the most disastrous situation, and which is much poorer than the West Bank—with about 1 million people, compared to just 15,000 in Jericho—has 50 percent unemployment. This is a higher level of unemployment than before the agreement was signed: First, a lot of people have begun to return from the Gulf states to which they were expelled; and second, Israel has now established a quota for Palestinian guest workers. So, as the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), it is now up to us to make ourselves more efficient in setting up our institutions that gobble up the aid from donor countries, as well as in coordinating, planning, and giving the people the feeling that we are making progress.

During the occupation, the Palestinian people showed signs of great political maturity by accepting gradual change and supporting the PLO when the Oslo agreement was signed. However, now they need physical proof that they have made the right choices. That proof has been too long coming. We have to show them that their standard of living is improving day by day and that is something we cannot do without aid from the international community, the European Union, and the Arab countries which have a duty to the Palestinians. The expense is too great. Without the Marshall Plan, Europe would not have been able to get to its feet either.

[Van Elzen] The money for this has been promised, but is not coming in. Why not?

[Aloni] I do not know. On the one hand, the donors do not want to give it, and on the other hand there is no system to transfer the money. You, the democratic countries, have control over what happens with money via parliaments and establishments. But they do not have a bank yet and no system for taking the money in, controlling it, and channeling it to the public. That is very important. Without it they will not be able to take over the education system in the West Bank and Gaza, or health care and other services. Nor will they be able to organize their elections. Here the Israelis are working together with them to try to get the money out of the donors.

[Shahid] The first condition which the donors laid down, after their meeting at the World Bank on 1 October 1993, was that an economic council must be set up as an autonomous office under the PNA to apply and implement plans. It is to be autonomous, transparent, not too bureaucratic, and answerable to the taxpayers of the donor countries. This is normal. We have done that. We now have the PECDAR, the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, founded in close cooperation with the World Bank, which acts as the secretariat of the community of donors. We also have the ad hoc liaison committee for aid to the West Bank and Gaza which has been holding meetings in Paris since October. The CG groups—Consultancy Groups—have met to make decisions on investment programs. Yet I do not think that there is an atmosphere of pressing urgency. The bureaucracy is too sluggish and heavy, and we are in a race against time.

This peace is about improving the everyday life of the Palestinians. We also have an opposition—from Islamic forces, from extremely violent regional forces such as Iran—'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani has claimed in interviews that this peace agreement is a masquerade, and as proof of this he says that nothing has changed in the people's everyday lives—and from a fundamentalist revolution in Algeria, which not only threatens Palestine, but the entire Arab world. We cannot allow ourselves to waste any time. If we receive the aid in January or February it will be too late. We are holding elections in December. They have already been delayed for months. We, who defended the Oslo agreements, must be able to show by December that we can take care of unemployment and provide better schools, doctors, and wages for the people who work for us: We are now responsible for all the schools in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as all the hospitals, etc.

Without money, we cannot do any of that. The donor community has promised a lot, but has not yet given very much. I am sure that the problem lies in the lack of mechanisms, but we have no time for that: A political decision must be made to speed up the payments. Otherwise, it will be too late to save Palestine, once the situation gets like it is in Somalia, and then it will cost the donor countries a lot more.

[Aloni] I hope they are listening to you.

[Shahid] Look, the European Union is concerned about the path taken by the crisis in the Arab world. Not just in Palestine. This peace settlement is an important part of

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that, because it is a regional peace, and the Palestinian-Israeli story lies at its center. I feel that it is more than just the national recognition of the Palestinian people, but also an example. It is a precedent for a democratic, secular, tolerant, and open relationship with Israel which has so far been rejected by the Arab world. If this relationship works, and this project is achieved, then it will be the first success against the side of reactionary, religiously exclusive forces. I do not want to say "fundamentalist" because that would be too specific a term.

We are all located around the Mediterranean. We have to learn how to share it—from technical problems, such as the environment and water, arms, and the nuclear threat to human rights, civil and political liberties, and national rights. All that goes together. The success of the Israeli-Palestinian effort is vital, not only for the Israelis and the Palestinians, but also for the Algerians, Tunisians, Jordanians, and Lebanese.

I feel that it would be smarter for Europe to invest in the success of this peace, than to try to hold back fundamentalism by financing large conferences to discuss the dangers of fundamentalism.

[Van Elzen] One gets the impression that there is a certain lack of willingness on the Israeli side to admit that things are going well.

[Aloni] I am perfectly willing to admit that, and I will be glad to talk about it. It is true that we have had stiff opposition, primarily from people who have gone to the West Bank to live. All these settlements are going to create a very big problem. Many years ago, the government sent people to the occupied territories with promises of a good life on land that was expropriated from Palestinians. Now it is very hard for the people who were in the government and who sent the people there to admit that that was a mistake. So they are trying to justify what they did, and they are opposing things. You have to bear in mind that people who have property are normally not going to jump at a chance to give it away. So we are faced with a problem. As soon as things get moving and they have held their elections, I think that what is called the "Zeitgeist" [spirit of the times] and the spirit of the people will be ready to admit that it is a country with two peoples. However, the longer it takes, the more time the people who are against it have to work together to organize a force for themselves. So we have to pound away and do it.

[Shahid] I think that the political threat of the process stems from Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's tendency to pay more attention to domestic politics than to the politics of peace. You know what happened on 25 February in Hebron when colonists attacked the Tomb of the Patriarch and murdered 29 people. That was pinned on a single man, but the truth is that Mr. Goldstein was not alone, and that anyone who defends the same views—i.e., that the West Bank must be kept by force and all Palestinians kicked out—is also guilty. At that time we proposed dismantling the colony in Hebron, and eight members of the government agreed. However, Rabin rejected that idea and the colonists are still in Hebron and are still threatening the people.

[Aloni] That was a mistake. A ban was placed on departures and it was the victims who had to suffer, not the Israelis who are there. However, Israel has still never had a foreign policy, only a domestic policy.

[Van Elzen] Would you say that Yitzhaq Rabin is inclined to be inflexible in negotiations?

[Aloni] I do not think he is generous enough. He negotiates as if among equals, forgetting that we are the occupying force, we have the Army, we have 5.5 million people, and that we are no longer the victims. We are the ones who have the power, and he who holds the power can be somewhat more generous. However, he negotiates as if among equals: I give you this, you give me that, etc. And surely, he listens to the opposition.

[Shahid] At the same time, people reproach Yasir 'Arafat for being too generous to the Israelis and for already giving away too much, when he has not got enough in return. However, we know that we have not won the war. We must accept that this peace process began after one of the biggest wars in the Middle East, the Gulf War, and that we did not win—neither the Palestinians nor the Arabs. At the end, however, I think that the reality in this conflict will appear much stronger than Rabin or 'Arafat. If tomorrow there is a "redeployment" of Israeli troops on the West Bank—as is anticipated in the agreement of 4 May, throughout the entire West Bank and not just in Jericho and Gaza, with a view to allowing us to organize our elections—that will make many settlers want to leave. They are already saying to the government that if they receive compensation then they do not want to live under an Arab majority, but would move within the borders of the green line.

They are asking for Rabin to give them the same compensation that Menachem Begin gave to the Yamit settlers in the Sinai. Those are what Rabin calls political settlements, in contrast to strategic settlements. According to Israeli estimates, these account for at least 40 percent of the settlers. In that case, we are no longer talking about 120,000 settlers, but rather 50,000 or 60,000. They can wait until the negotiations of the last phase have begun.

However, there must be an immediate "redeployment" so that we can move forward to the elections. For the Palestinians the elections are the first expression of their political freedom and they will lend a political dynamic to the atmosphere. However, if we postpone them any more we could lose the majority, and we, the PLO, which defended the peace process, could end up in the minority and not be entitled to implement its policies.

[Aloni] There is one thing we have not talked about, and that makes things harder. There is still terrorism and people are being killed. This gives the opposition a

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tremendous strength, because the Jews still have the victim mentality. And every time there is a terrorist action and Jewish blood flows, it feeds this mentality and prevents us from making progress. That is one of the reasons why the borders are from time to time closed off to Palestinian workers who come to work in Israel. They are slowing down the development of the peace process. We are well aware that they are the acts of a minority bent on destroying the peace process, but it is a real obstacle that we have to overcome.

[Shahid] However, most of these attacks are against soldiers or settlers in Gaza—many more than take place in the West Bank or in Israel. Take Gush Katif, a settlement in Gaza. There are 5,000 settlers there. Just by being there they are a provocation for the Palestinian opposition, because it is very easy to attack them in Gaza. If the Israeli government had withdrawn these settlements then there would have been far less opportunity for these kinds of actions. However, now you get the impression that the Palestinian police are being asked to protect the settlers!

I think that the violence will gradually taper off when the Palestinians realize that they have something to lose if they use violence. Because who is that? The opposition? It is also Palestinians. The people in Hamas are the brothers and fathers of Palestinian families. Once such a family feels that what it has to gain from this peace agreement is more important than an attack on a settler in Gaza, then they will begin to exert pressure on the members of Hamas or the opposition to stop jeopardizing the peace process. But first they have to have something to lose. So far they have only seen a handshake, and the PLO is recognized in Gaza, but their lives there have not changed. That is why it is so important to improve living conditions: You cannot stop the violence with a ban from 'Arafat or repression by the Palestinian police alone. But you can stop it with the advantages of peace: jobs, schools, freedom of expression, etc. So we have to find a way to get rid of the feeling of insecurity on the Israeli side, while at the same time alleviating the socio-economic needs on the Palestinian side.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Moroccan Prime Minister Addresses Summit Committee

LD2309144894 Rabat MAP in English 1241 GMT 23 Sep 94

[Text] Rabat, Sept.23 (MAP)—The steering committee of the economic summit on the Middle East and North Africa to take place in Casablanca Oct.30-Nov.1 held a first meeting Thursday afternoon in Rabat.

The committee reviewed the various items on the agenda of the Casablanca conference, the goals of the conference at the level of regional cooperation and partnership projects. It also discussed the various systems likely to be set in motion to consolidate and speed up the economic development process in the region. A number of organizational questions were also reviewed.

In an opening address, Moroccan Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Abdellatif Filali said the Casablanca conference will constitute a turning point for the future both of the peace process and of the development process.

The conference will provide the opportunity to measure up on determination of countries, international organizations and private investors to consolidate the peace process through regional cooperation and a common and balanced economic development, Filali said.

The Casablanca conference, he said, will be an exceptional forum from which to inform governments, international experts and private investors of the huge potentials the region can yield once peace is restored.

"Statesmen, corporate leaders and private investors will draw in Casablanca the map of the new Arab world which is organizing itself according to criteria of growth, development and prosperity shared by the largest number, an Arab world open to partnership and to exchange and eager to base its future on a cooperation strategy and not on isolation and confrontation", Filali said.

The prime minister pointed out that Morocco, while hosting this major event, is not oblivious of the fact that all the political problems have not been settled yet: Arab territories are still occupied and the Palestinian state is still being instituted, he said adding he is confident that the peace process will only be achieved in the frame of dialog and consultation.

The steering committee meeting was attended by special coordinator for Middle East affairs at the State Department Dennis Ross and member of the National Security Council Martin Indyk (USA), assistant director of the Middle East and Africa Department Valeriy Kuzmin (Russia), a Palestinian delegation headed by Abu quch, director general at the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry (Israel), Egyptian Vice Foreign Minister Badr Hamam, Nabil Ammary from Jordan, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Rabat Hamad Abu Shihab, Ambassador of Germany to Morocco Herwig Bartels, head of the European Commission delegation to Rabat Marc Pierini, vice president of the council on foreign relations Mrs Karen M. Sughre and manager of the World Economic Forum Gregory Blat.

Besides Filali who chaired the meeting, the Moroccan delegation included adviser to King Hassan II for economic and financial affairs Andre Azoulay, minister in charge of economy boosting Omur K Baj, secretary of state for foreign affairs and cooperation Taieb Fassi Fihri and head of the sovereign special secretariat Abdelkrim Bennani.

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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 23 Sep

NC2609165694

[Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 September issue of the Arabic-language newspaper Cairo AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS

1. Activist Students Banned from Dormitories
2. 'Adil Husayn on ICPD, Iraq
3. Ghannouchi Views Algeria's Prospects
4. Al-Turabi Views Fundamentalism

ACTIVIST STUDENTS BANNED FROM DORMITORIES

A 200-word report by Mu'taz al-Hadidi on page 1 says that "the Interior Ministry has issued strict orders to university dormitories to dismiss any student, male of female, who is involved in religious or political activities."

According to the report, the ministry asked the dormitories to dismiss students involved in any number of violations including the use of loudspeakers and the posting of posters inside the dormitories without permission, recruitment of other students in activist groups, organization of meetings, distribution of leaflets "with a political or religious content conflicting with social peace," participation or call for participation in sit-ins or demonstrations disturbing the public order.

The report says that Cairo University has already dismissed three female students after searching their dormitory rooms and finding there Student Union documents and religious books.

'ADIL HUSAYN ON ICPD, IRAQ

A 6,000-word commentary by Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn on page 5 hails the uproar that greeted the International Conference on Population and Development, ICPD, as a "turning point" and commends what he describes as a "faith campaign" in Iraq.

Husayn says that the ICPD was not just "a victory for Muslims, but a miracle." He elaborates, saying that the "myth of separation of religion and politics" has collapsed in a "historic victory for Islamists in this country."

This is true, Husayn explains, because "al-Azhar ulema spoke out loud, followed by mosque ulema all over the country, ending "the fictional division between 'official Islam' and 'opposition Islam,' the latter having been conventionally seen as extremist."

Husayn says: "With Islamic revival on the rise, the entire body of ulema and the full congregation of Muslims stood up, with undaunted courage, to defend God's faith and tenets." Husayn also commends the Coptic Church and the Vatican for their opposition to the ICPD.

Husayn then refers to his "visit to Iraq," and commends the "reconstruction miracle" or "the miracle of digging rivers and reclaiming millions of acres to achieve self-sufficiency in food."

He mentions that Iraq suffered from "social disturbances resulting from poverty," a fact which led to "increased crime." Crime, he adds, was only curbed "through an intentional transformation of state and society to Islam." Elaborating on this point, Husayn says: "A 'faith campaign' is happening in which the education of Koran, its recitation and lessons is paramount. Television and the mosques are instrumental in this regard."

Husayn recounts other elements of this campaign: "Betting on the horses was stopped four months ago. Nightclubs and bars were closed one and a half months ago. The chopping of hands as a punishment for theft was introduced two months ago."

GHANNOUCHI VIEWS ALGERIA'S PROSPECTS

Tunisia's Ennahda Movement leader Rached Ghannouchi contributes a 2,500-word commentary on page 8 about the release of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leaders 'Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj and its significance for the country's future.

Ghannouchi says that the "partial release of the two shaykhs [Madani and Belhadj] will mark the end of one era and the beginning of another, not only for Algeria but for the Arab Maghreb, for Arab and Muslim countries, and for the entire world."

Ghannouchi says that the release signals the fact that the "all-out security solution" has failed in Algeria. The situation in this country, he writes, is one of "military parity that could potentially lead to prolonged bloodletting and possible civil war." This is why "national and Islamic forces, opposed to the security solution" spoke out in favor of dialogue.

Ghannouchi says that "FIS has established itself on the Algerian and international scenes as a voice of reason that rejects all forms of terror, including attacks on innocents and foreigners and arson against hospitals, schools, and public facilities."

Discussing the prospects of reconciliation in Algeria, Ghannouchi says that "it is my opinion that the national and Islamic forces in the government and the opposition have moved to close a chapter of destruction that began with the coup [abrogation of the elections]. The fire is dying down."

Ghannouchi concludes by calling on "Islamic Algeria" to "assume a role of inspiration in the region and the world, eschewing direct intervention and export-the-revolution slogans," and "creating a social model that demonstrates

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the justice and mercy of Islam, promotes development and equality, and acknowledges pluralism and the transfer of power through the ballot."

AL-TURABI VIEWS FUNDAMENTALISM

Hasan al-Turabi, leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front, contributed a 2,200-word commentary entitled "The West and the Islamic Revival" on page 9.

Al-Turabi says that "fundamentalism is the Islamic response to the Western challenge. The so-called Crusades were nothing more than early imperialist attempts that failed." But "subsequent imperialist attempts," he writes, managed to "erase Islam from the public life of Muslims, in education, government and economy."

Al-Turabi adds: "In the age of the communications revolution, distances narrowed, bringing closer the [Western] challenges." The first reaction to these challenges was nationalistic, but "the leaders of the nationalist revolutions failed once official independence was attained, because they had nothing to offer to their nations."

This led to the "Islamic revival" which, al-Turabi states, went through three phases: spiritual, cultural, and, finally, action with the rise of "mass movements" such as the Iranian revolution and the FIS.

The goal of such movements is "to combine politics and religion." These movements, al-Turabi writes, "disagree with the Western idea of the separation of church and state. Religion is an indivisible whole, encompassing this life as well as the hereafter. Politics is just one of the aspects of religion. When these [Islamic] movements give ultimate supremacy to sharia, they are simply countering the Western practice of viewing natural law as the ultimate point of reference."

Palestinian Affairs

Muhammad 'Abbas Discusses Terrorism, Peace

NC2509125694 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 13 Sep 94 p 21

[Interview with Muhammad 'Abbas, alias Abu-al-'Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front, by an unidentified L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI correspondent; place, date not given—the interview is translated into Arabic by Marlin Abu-Hamad]

[Text] [L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] What was the aim of the attack that claimed many lives in Buenos Aires on 18 July and the explosion of a booby-trapped car near the Israeli Embassy in London?

['Abbas] Only those responsible for these attacks know their aim. All I can say is that these acts are an attempt to turn back the clock.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Israeli secret services have for decades been hostile to Syria and Libya, but these services have now concluded that Iran is the force manipulating international terror. Is it true that the Iranians are the new godfathers of terror?

['Abbas] I have no definite information about the recent operations, but it is clear that the perpetrators of these attacks oppose the Middle East peace process.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Two years ago Hizballah was accused of blowing up the Israeli Embassy in Argentina to avenge the assassination of [Hizballah leader] 'Abbas al-Musawi, whose car was shelled by an Israeli helicopter two and a half years ago.

On 2 June 1994, Israeli planes shelled a Hizballah camp in south Lebanon, killing about 30 fighters. Was the destruction of the Jewish center in Buenos Aires a response to this recent attack?

['Abbas] Knowing the Middle East mentality, this would make sense. We can assume that revenge was the primary motive of those who carried out the bombing.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] The Buenos Aires bombing was not the only attack in recent weeks. A plane carrying Jewish businessmen exploded in Panama and two booby-trapped cars were detonated in central London. This means that the "new terrorists" are efficient and well-organized professionals.

['Abbas] Of course, but it is impossible to organize costly overseas attacks without backing from a state's service.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Is the source the same for Hizballah, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], those who attacked the World Trade Center, and the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front?

['Abbas] There is not just one backer; the planners are like-minded.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Rabin's adviser General (Ival Brisler) and Israeli Minister Yosi Sarid have threatened to hunt down the perpetrators. Can they do that?

['Abbas] Israeli agents roam the world freely. In 1973 and 1979 they killed a total of 10 Black September fighters believed to have taken part in the Munich Olympics attack. A Moroccan man who was working in Norway became a victim of this manhunt when he was abducted, although he knew nothing about the Palestinian issue and was never involved in anything.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Has the Mosad tried to kill you?

['Abbas] I am not aware of any such move by the Mosad, but the Israeli army tried to liquidate me several times. When I was in Lebanon, Israeli planes shelled the areas I was in. In 1982, the PLF [Palestine Liberation Front] headquarters, where I was staying, was razed to the ground.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Do you still fear for your life?

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['Abbas] I must take precautions; the United States has not stated its position clearly. We have moved from a combat situation to a state of peace. The Americans are calling the shots and they hold the key to the peace process.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] The United States called for your extradition when the plane was hijacked. Does this request still stand?

['Abbas] Officially, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has stopped chasing me, but the Italians have not dropped the charges against me.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Do you advise armed struggle?

['Abbas] I prefer the peace process. I know the road is long and difficult and that we cannot arrive at our goals all at once. Many things remain unchanged in the region but radical changes have taken place worldwide and the time is right for negotiations.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] How does the self-rule in Gaza and Jericho affect the PLF?

['Abbas] We belong to the PLF despite our differences with 'Arafat. [sentence as published] We support the peace process. We defend our right to the liberation of Palestine and obtaining a homeland with Jerusalem as our capital. What happened over the past few months takes us closer to this goal. The self-rule in Gaza and Jericho is a good start.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] What are the basic differences between you and 'Arafat?

['Abbas] The differences lie in the negotiating approach and the energy put into it. They lie also in the relations we should maintain with Arab states or the type of unity that should be achieved among the Palestinians, Jordanians, and Syrians.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Hizballah has pledged to oppose and confront the peace process with weapons and all means possible. Do you think they will succeed?

['Abbas] This depends on the progress of the conference. If dreams come true and peace is no longer just a cliche, Hizballah will be unable to constitute an opposition.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Are you not concerned that recent attacks might hamper the peace process?

['Abbas] This is what the perpetrator wants. But this will not halt the peace process; it is a futile and unviable approach.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] But will you punish the people responsible for these attacks?

['Abbas] I have always been against acts that claim the lives of people not involved in the struggle.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] But as PLF chairman, you were primarily responsible for hijacking a boat and killing a Jewish American who was not involved in the struggle. He was crippled.

['Abbas] At that stage of violent struggle, our enemy was attacking us ruthlessly with its planes, helicopters, and all kinds of sophisticated equipment. Every time they attacked the camps, scores of civilians were killed. We had nothing more than our will and faith. These things happen during war. We made mistakes too.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Can you enumerate these mistakes?

['Abbas] The hijacking of the boat was a mistake. I planned that operation in exchange for a ship carrying 450 passengers. A commando was to take a boat to the Israeli port of Ashdod and launch a surprise attack on the military base there. Our target was military but things ran contrary to what we planned.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Do you have any regrets?

['Abbas] Some. Like the hijacking and the killing of the American Jew.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] You claim that you have no accurate information on recent attacks. But you have certainly heard of 'Imad Mughaniyah, who is emerging as a "new Carlos." Colonel North described him as "the most dangerous terrorist in the world."

['Abbas] He is a Shiite Lebanese. He is a very important person and has links with Iran. It is believed that he was behind the kidnapping of many foreigners in Lebanon. He might have been involved in recent acts, because of his importance and contacts.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] It seems that you have no positive view of Iranians.

['Abbas] This is common knowledge.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Are you on good terms with Colonel al-Qadhdhafi?

['Abbas] He is worthy of respect. But I have been out of touch with him for a year.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Can you say the same thing about Saddam Husayn?

['Abbas] I have a good relationship with the Iraqi president, whom I respect very much. When the Gulf war started I stayed in Baghdad. I thought an Arab nation was coming under attack and that I should show solidarity with my brothers who were being attacked.

[L'EVENEMENT DU JEUDI] Do you live in the Iraqi capital now?

['Abbas] I own a house in Baghdad. But I also own houses in every Arab city. My dream is to own a house in Gaza or Jericho soon.

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Jihad Leader Views 'Arafat Opposition

JN2509153594 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Sep 94 p 39

[Interview with Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement, by Dawud Almani in Damascus—date not given]

[Text] [Almani] You made a direct threat to Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the limited self-rule authority, after the arrest campaign launched by the Palestinian police against the cadres of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Gaza. Does this mean the start of real confrontation with 'Arafat?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Confrontation takes various dimensions, including armed confrontation against occupation soldiers and settlers in the self-rule area and elsewhere. In all this, we try to avoid any confrontation with the Palestinian police. We have our methods for continuing our struggle and for avoiding any clashes with the police.

We will respond to the arrest campaigns by escalating our political and popular moves against the self-rule authority, and by carrying out more military activities against occupation. We are aware that the police personnel are not responsible for these arrests. Yasir 'Arafat is personally responsible. He is the person who issues orders, or who carries out orders issued to him to pursue the mujahidin.

If you mean by real confrontation armed confrontation with the self-rule authority, this does not fall within our plans or decisions. So, when we say 'Arafat shoulders direct responsibility, he knows full well that we are trying to avoid direct confrontation with the police.

[Almani] Do you believe you are able to enter into confrontation with 'Arafat?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We will continue to work against the Oslo-Cairo accords. We will continue this confrontation to the end because our duty is more important than anything else. When we revolted against occupation we acted on the justice of our cause and on our right to our homeland, regardless of the unjust balance of power. Revolutions are launched against criminal forces. I believe if we do not face the conspiracy now, things will become more difficult.

[Almani] How do you see the stand of ordinary Palestinian citizens? What is your assessment of the balance of power in the occupied territory?

[Al-Shaqaqi] What took place over the past two weeks showed that ordinary Palestinian citizens sympathize with the Islamic Jihad Movement, rally around it, and have confidence in it. Those Palestinians have given the movement more strength, vigor, and coherence. The Palestinian people are today exposing all faces of the plot and deception. They firmly believe the Oslo accord will bring them more suffering, but this time, the suffering is mixed with humiliation, shame, and frustration. Thus, Palestinian citizens have increased their sympathy with the strugglers and mujahidin, who are taking revenge for crimes committed against them and who embody their ambitions for dignity, freedom, and real independence.

Furthermore, the Palestinian people have begun to learn that the new authority is nothing more than an illusion disputed by gangs and centers of power. The only force possessed by the self-rule authority is the continuing Western, American, and Israeli support. On the Palestinian level, however, this authority has lost its legitimacy and credibility. It is correct that the opposition sometimes faces obstacles for internal and objective reasons. However, it has not exhausted all its methods. The opposition is still capable of stopping the collapse, despite the strong wind blowing against it.

[Almani] How do you view the Palestinian opposition in this stage? What shortcomings does it face?

[Al-Shaqaq] It is natural and necessary to see a Palestinian opposition. It is hard for a Palestinian to forget his homeland. It is hard for this homeland to be foreign to any Palestinian. The plot against the Palestinian cause is very serious these days. It aims at liquidating this cause and canceling the name of Palestine. Hence, the opposition must be large and must include large sectors of the Palestinian people; it should be serious. I believe the 10 Palestinian factions opposing the peace process are part of a larger popular opposition.

But we must acknowledge that opposing factions face many problems. Having lived dozens of years without any serious change or any internal ideological, organizational, or structural revolution, many of those factions face organizational troubles. This means these factions, taken as as a whole, are experiencing a state of internal weakness and indecisiveness. Saving the factions will require a genuine revolution affecting ideologies, methods, and structures.

As part of the crises experienced by the Palestinian opposition, there is the issue of nonconfidence among some factions. Every faction has doubts about how serious the other factions are about confronting the conspiracy and the limited administrative self-rule. The absence of confidence results in indecisiveness. In this context, we need a lengthy, serious, and in-depth dialogue to remove the doubts about each other.

The other issue is that for the first time in its history, the Palestinian opposition finds itself without any domestic, regional, or international support, while the other party is involved in the political settlement process. It is receiving international and regional support around the clock. All these factors combine as basic and substantial obstacles to the Palestinian opposition.

Still, I believe the opposition has a great role to play via the unity of its ranks and of all Palestinian oppositionists, whether they are factions, parties, personalities, or various popular groups. All these forces must unite to

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confront the side that is giving the Zionist enemy everything, without getting anything in return. I still believe the basic mission of the opposition at this stage is to stop the deterioration of the Palestinian arena and then to prepare to strengthen domestic national unity, to escalate the armed struggle, and to maintain and support the intifadah in order to prolong the conflict, until the balance of power tips in favor of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation.

The opposition has exerted and continues to exert great efforts in a world with a sole superpower—the United States. But this effort is hardly noticeable in view of the great opposing force. However, thanks to its resilience, this effort must attain its objectives.

[Almani] How can the Palestinian opposition overcome its problems?

[Al-Shaqaqi] As I said, there must be an internal dialogue inside each faction. The dialogue must consider important developments at all levels and must be inspired by the heritage of the people and the nation to foster critical, innovative, and genuine thinking. This requires a coherent framework. The relationship between thought and the organization is a dialectic relationship. You cannot put forward a revolutionary idea in an unrevolutionary organization. Nor can you put forward a sound and healthy idea in an unsound and unhealthy organization. In other words, we need a cultural and organizational revolution in the ranks of the Palestinian opposition to renew the organizational mentality. We must read our situation in an enlightened way to provide satisfactory and sound answers to our problems.

The crisis of confidence is there because of the distance separating factions. The Alliance of Palestinian Forces [APF] comprises Islamic, pan-Arab, nationalist, and leftist tendencies. The moment all those forces met was a bright moment in the history of the Palestinian political movement. We need time to build confidence among various groups of different intellectual orientations. We are still an early stage. Time is needed before we can develop enough understanding, complete harmony, and firmness to be able resist any shock that might be directed at us.

There is another element to this issue, namely, mutual political doubts among some factions because of our failure to hold frequent meetings. We can be swayed by rumors circulated here or there. Regrettably, very few meetings are held by the Palestinian opposition factions. They are not enough to remove these doubts. Consequently, a thorough and frank dialogue would be capable of ending mistrust among the factions. The political positions of these factions are flawed. Still, these flaws are nothing compared to the mutual distrust. What plagues these factions is the absence of international or regional support for the Palestinian opposition at this point in time. This is unprecedented in the history of the Palestinian revolution. I believe, in order to safeguard our credibility, we should work forcefully to garner the support of all segments of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people in occupied Palestine should be mobilized against the conspiracy. This task acquires added significance in the absence of such regional or international support, which would be meaningless if there is no strong national unity opposed to plots. Once we create this large-scale popular mobilization, we will find that some parties support us.

[Almani] When leaders of the leftist Palestinian organizations are asked about Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad, they frown. Why this sensitivity?

[Al-Shaqaqi] I am dissatisfied because APF members meet at long intervals. This worsens the problem and aggravates the mistrust. This renders APF members dependent on external sources for information regarding one another. We are working to make arrangements to hold intensive meetings at the level of faction leaders to discuss our problems, without getting bogged down in useless rhetoric. All factions must demonstrate unity to reflect the unity of the people opposed to the Oslo-Cairo accords, and other similar accords. We must shun the feeling of self-sufficiency within ourselves. We should not deny the existence of others. We must extend our hands to one another without any sensitivity, on the basis of trust, understanding, and harmony.

[Almani] But, have you not noticed this frowning?

[Al-Shaqaqi] I have not noticed this frowning. Should it happen, we must then seek to promote mutual trust and overcome any intellectual or political sensitivity. Similarly, we must work seriously to implement the Palestinian national program. With regard to the positions of some toward Islamist factions, or the positions of Islamist factions toward nationalist factions, I would like to acknowledge that there are ideological differences among us. Still, our great accomplishment has been our ability to sidestep these ideological differences and agree on broader cooperation and coordination on the political scene. Regardless of the political disparities plaguing our positions, we have managed to identify a common denominator and a national program, on the basis of which we can wage the battle against the conspiracy facing us. This is the task of Islamists and non-Islamists alike. Islamists should not abandon nationalists, and vice versa. No faction is capable of waging the battle singlehandedly.

DFLP, PFLP Reportedly Cut 'Fighting' Cadres

JN2509131494 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Sep 94 p 25

[Text] Damascus—AL-RA'Y has learned that a number of Palestinian opposition parties have cut the number of their fighting cadres, turning some of them to civilian work. Palestinian sources told AL-RA'Y that the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], the

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Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], and the PFLP—General Command have cut their cadres by half.

A source close to DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah said the front has reorganized its administrative body so that money previously spent abroad will go to the occupied homeland.

Fatah Sets Up Supreme Committee in West Bank

TA2609143594 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Sep 94 p A2

[Report by Dani Rubinstein]

[Excerpts] The Fatah leadership in the West Bank convened yesterday in Ramallah and decided to set up the institutions which will form the basis of the general and municipal elections scheduled to be held in the territories. Faysal al-Husayni, who was appointed to this post six months ago by Yasir 'Arafat, was reelected Fatah's chairman in the West Bank. Marwan al-Barghuthi, an intifadah activist who headed the students union at Bi'r Zayt University and was deported from the territories, was elected Fatah's secretary general. After his return, al-Barghuthi was seen as a key Fatah activist in the West Bank. [passage omitted]

The establishment of Fatah's supreme committee in the West Bank was announced yesterday. In addition to al-Husayni and al-Barghuthi, other members of the committee are Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Palestinian security services in the West Bank, 'Isa Abu- Bakr, Jamal al-Shubaki, and Tawfiq al-Barghuthi.

Most of the appointees are activists in their 30's and 40's who headed the popular committees set up upon the outbreak of the intifadah. They represent the generation that led the uprising in the West Bank, most of them served long terms in Israeli prisons, and some of them were deported by the Israeli authorities and joined PLO and Fatah institutions in Tunis.

A Fatah activist stated last night that these decisions were mainly an effort to organize Fatah's apparatus were not meant to create an alternative to the current leadership. [passage omitted]

Fatah Official Criticizes Delegates' Performance

JN2509192294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Interview with Marwan al-Barguthi, secretary of the Fatah Movement in the West Bank, by correspondent As'ad 'Attar; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] ['Attar] Marwan al-Barguthi, secretary of the Fatah Movement in the West Bank, good evening.

[Al-Barguthi] Good evening. You are welcome.

['Attar] The Movement today met and made a host of decisions. What draws our attention is the fact that you are demanding the reformation of the Palestinian negotiating delegation. Why?

[Al-Barguthi] In fact, this extraordinary meeting was a comprehensive meeting that studied in detail many current affairs in the occupied territories. Discussions focused on the obstacles and barriers the Israeli Government is placing before the implementation of the second part of the Oslo agreement.

Among the issues that need to be emphasized is to enhance the Palestinian negotiating delegation in a way that will secure implementing the Palestinian reading of the Oslo agreement. This is because we believe the Palestinian negotiating delegation is showing some dereliction in its negotiations with the Israeli Government, foremost being the issue of releasing all Palestinian detainees. We loudly demand giving high priority to this issue ...

['Attar, interrupting] In other words, you believe that some members of the Palestinian delegation failed in the negotiations with the Israeli side?

[Al-Barguthi] Naturally, in our assessment there is dereliction in some aspects. However, I believe the Palestinian Authority and the brother president have taken this issue into account. We, however, believe negotiations on the second part of the Oslo agreement need enhancing; the level, efficiency, and ability of the Palestinian negotiating delegation need to be upgraded.

['Attar] Have you decided to form a preparatory committee for the elections?

[Al-Barguthi] Yes. As you know, two weeks ago the Palestinian Ministerial Council decided to push forward the general elections plan, which we consider a substantive plan and a new beginning in the Palestinian people's history. This plan will grant our people an opportunity to freely express their will regarding the election of their representatives to the Palestinian legislative council.

Accordingly, we have set up an expanded preparatory committee comprising more than 200 Fatah cadres from various areas, frameworks, and institutions in order to accomplish and promote this mission.

['Attar] This issue, however, is still under discussion and subject to negotiations.

[Al-Barguthi] This is true, indeed. This issue is subject to negotiations. We will do our part in order to compel the Israeli side to accept the Palestinian position and the paper on the general elections.

['Attar] Thank you, Marwan al-Barguthi, secretary of the Fatah Movement in the West Bank.

[Al-Barguthi] Thank you.

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Israeli 'Allegations' Said 'Baseless'

JN2509131894 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Sep 94 p 21

["Exclusive" report from Jericho]

[Text] Palestinian Labor Minister Samir Ghawshah has said that Israel suspended talks on any new Palestinian Authority staff or police lists until the Palestinian side submits a list of the people recruited in the Gaza Strip and Jericho following the start of the Palestinian Authority last July.

Ghawshah added that the Israeli side accuses the Palestinian side of recruiting thousands of Palestinian youths in the security organs in violation of the Cairo Agreement, which allows for the entry of 7,000 policemen and the recruitment of 2,000 from the occupied territories for a total of 9,000 policemen.

Ghawshah said that no more than 5,500 policemen have thus far entered the Gaza Strip and Jericho. He termed the Israeli allegations baseless.

Sha'th Says Australia To Join Observer Force

JN2609133294 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0730 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, said upon his arrival in Cairo last night that Australia has agreed to take part in the international force that will be deployed in Gaza and Jericho.

It is worth mentioning that the Palestinian-Israeli agreement signed in Cairo on 4 May stipulates the formation of a provisional international force, comprising 400 observers, personnel, and experts from countries extending assistance to the Palestinian police personnel in the areas of training, supervision, and implementation. This force is scheduled to be deployed in seven areas in Gaza and Jericho for a renewable six-month period.

New Daily Appears in PNA Area, West Bank

JN2309155794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1030 GMT 23 Sep 94

[Interview with Tahir Furaytih, owner of FILASTIN (PALESTINE) newspaper, by correspondent Salim Abu-Jami' in Gaza on 23 September; from the "Within the Midday Events" program—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Furaytih] This is an objective and independent newspaper. When we thought about issuing it, we submitted a request to Authority President Yasir 'Arafat. We then started work immediately. We succeeded in publishing the first issue today.

[Abu-Jami'] Mr. Tahir. Does this newspaper belong to any particular political current?

[Furaytih] Certainly not. It belongs to the Palestinian people and to the Palestinian homeland.

[Abu-Jami'] Where is this newspaper distributed?

[Furaytih] As a start, it is being distributed throughout the PNA [Palestinian National Authority] area, in addition to Jerusalem and the West Bank areas that are still under Israeli occupation. In the future stage, we will distribute this newspaper in the rest of the areas within the green line.

[Abu-Jami'] Who finances this newspaper?

[Furaytih] It is financed by Palestinian shareholders inside Palestine and by Palestinians living abroad.

[Abu-Jami'] The newspaper was distributed today. Is it being well received?

[Furaytih] In fact, today we published 6,000 copies and only a few were left unsold. The newspaper was very well received, especially in the Gaza Strip, which has become [words indistinct] for local press. I am happy because FILASTIN is the first Palestinian newspaper issued by the PNA. This was welcomed by people in the Gaza Strip, in particular, and in other areas in the West Bank. [passage omitted]

OPEC Affairs

Libyan, Qatari Oil Ministers on Production, Prices

LD2509165194 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1515 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Excerpt] Doha, 25 Sep—Libyan Oil Minister 'Abdallah al-Badri, the OPEC president, stressed here today that most OPEC countries were committed to their determined production quotas.

In statements to journalists after his meeting with Qatari Energy and Industry Minister 'Abdallah al-'Atutag within the framework of his current visit to Doha, he said there was to a large extent great commitment over production by the OPEC member countries, since an agreement had been reached on the recent production quotas in October last year.

Al-Badri pointed out that the world in the next century would rely to a large extent on OPEC oil, pointing out that the countries of the organization were the only ones that could satisfy the world needs for oil in the year 2000 and 2010.

On his part, Abdullah Bin Hamad al-Atiyyah said in a similar statement to journalists that the present price of oil was very weak, that there were still variations between one day and the other, and that prices were unstable.

He said OPEC's aim was for oil prices to reach at least a stable price that gives some sort of constancy and stability for the market in place of those fluctuating prices, which relied on rumors and the market's illogical nature.

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Al-Atiyyah called for the continuation of OPEC's present production ceiling, which amounted to 24.52 million barrels per day over the following six months, and to allow prices the opportunity to give suitable returns.

He pointed out that OPEC's targeted price was 21 dollars, except that we have not yet reached this price. [passage omitted]

Further on Comments

NC2509201594 Paris AFP in English 1749 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Doha, Sept 25 (AFP)—OPEC members should aim for a price of 18 to 22 dollars a barrel over the next three years, OPEC President 'Abdallah al-Badri said here Sunday [25 September].

Al-Badri did not explain why the price target differed from OPEC's benchmark price of 21 dollars, set in 1990 but never reached because of the weak state of the oil market.

"OPEC countries respect their production quotas but the benchmark price is a long way from being reached," al-Badri said after a meeting with Qatari Energy Minister 'Abdallah al-'Atiyah.

Oil prices increased to nearly 19 dollars last month before falling to around 16 dollars following a crippling oil strike in Nigeria, a key OPEC member.

Al-Badri, who is also Libya's oil minister, was in Qatar as part of a tour of key Gulf oil producers.

Speaking in Abu Dhabi Saturday, he said he would lobby for an agreement to maintain the 12-member cartel's production ceiling of 24.52 million barrels per day (bpd).

The Qatari minister said he also favoured the extension of the current ceiling "for the first quarter of 1995."

Oil ministers of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries are to meet on the Indonesian island of Bali in November to discuss the ceiling, which has remained unchanged since September 1993.

Al-Badri said the output ceiling should remain unchanged even after the eventual return of Iraq to the oil market, but OPEC members would have to discuss a redistribution of individual quotas.

The United Nations imposed a trade and oil embargo on Baghdad in August 1990 after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, and recently voted to extend it for two months.

Certain countries including Saudi Arabia have sharply hiked crude oil production since 1990 to fill the gap left by Iraqi exports.

Baghdad, hoping the embargo will be lifted soon, plans to ask for its pre-1990 OPEC quota of 3.2 million bpd to be restored when it resumes exports.

Al-Badri reiterated OPEC's opposition to plans by some Western countries to slap extra taxes on energy as part of their fight against pollution.

"Taxes already form 67 percent of the price of a barrel of oil," al-Badri said.

New taxes would have "negative effects on (OPEC) production" and would undermine the cartel's attempts to meet global demand, which is expected to rise to almost 10 million bpd by 2010, he added.

Al-Badri is also due to visit Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman for talks about the oil market. He will hand over messages from Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi calling for the convening of an Arab summit to improve relations in the region.

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Algeria

Killing of GIA Leader Confirmed

LD2609162694 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] In a communique released today, the security forces have announced that Cherif Gousmi, alias Abou Abdallah, who had proclaimed himself leader of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], was killed today in an area of the capital Algiers.

Another communique released by the security forces said that an economics lecturer in the university of Oran [western Algeria], Abdallah Faredheb [name as heard], received serious gun wounds today at 0800 as he was leaving his home.

FFS Activist 'Assassinated'; Another 'Eliminated'

LD2609144194 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpt] Socialist Forces Front [FFS] activist Ait Messaoud Kaci was assassinated in Thenia yesterday. In its statement, the FFS condemned the assassination which targeted one of its activists.

Furthermore, the security services announced that they eliminated Ali Benyahia Kouider in Tegara forest in Ain Defla Province last Thursday [22 September]. [passage omitted]

Berbers Threaten Singer's Kidnappers

NC2609130994 Paris AFP in English 1225 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Algiers, Sept 26 (AFP)—The Berber Cultural Movement (MCB) on Monday threatened "total war" on Algerian Islamic fundamentalists if they did not promptly release kidnapped Berber singer Lounes Matoub.

Matoub, 38, known for his anti-fundamentalist views, was kidnapped overnight on his way between Tizi-Ouzu, 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Algiers, and his village of Taourirt Moussa, the MCB said.

The organisation claimed he was taken by "elements claiming to represent Islamic armed groups".

"If Matoub is not returned safe and sound to his family within 48 hours, a total war will be waged against all of them (the kidnappers) and all those, without exception, who help them in any way," the organisation said in a statement.

Bosnian Killed, Professor in Critical Condition

NC2609162294 Paris AFP in English 1559 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Algiers, Sept 26 (AFP)—A Bosnian citizen was slain on Monday near Skikda in eastern Algeria, the APS news agency said, becoming the 61st foreigner killed in the country in a year.

Jure Markicevic, 54, a surveyor working for a Bosnian company, was killed while in his car, the agency said.

News of his death came as security forces reported an economics professor at the western Oran University had sustained serious gunshot wounds Monday morning near his home.

Abderrahmane Fardeheb, university research director and an activist in the ex-communist Ettahaddi movement was hit by several bullets as he left his home with his daughter, security forces said.

He was "fighting for survival" at Oran hospital, according to an Ettahaddi statement received by AFP.

Islamic fundamentalist groups fighting to oust the military-backed regime have warned foreign residents to quit the country or face death, and issued wide-ranging threats against the country's secular educational establishment.

Economics Professor Dies of Gunshot Wounds

LD2609223194 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The Algerian Press Service, citing medical sources, said that Abdallah Fardeheb, professor of economics at Oran University who was gravely wounded by gunfire this morning when he was leaving his house, has since died of his wounds. [passage omitted]

Minister on Security, Staffing at Universities

LD2609192094 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpts] As I mentioned at the beginning of this bulletin, our colleague Mokhtar Mahir can now talk to the host of our bulletin, Mr. Boubekeur Benbouzid, minister of higher education and scientific research. [passage omitted: interviewer welcomes the minister. Benbouzid replies to a question on the measures the government and the ministry took to face threats directed at educational institutes]

[Begin recording] [Benbouzid] As you know these are mere threats and the difficult security situation has started long time ago, since 1992, and a number of universities were harmed by some elements who want to destroy these universities. However, this year we have started implementing a program to defend these universities because these universities were built by the sweat of our martyrs and people. Each university is worth over 500 billion [Algerian dinars] and over 150 billion of hard currency. It is impossible to rebuild it in the future because first, there are no resources, and second, there is not enough time to deal with the new situation; as you know, every year there are a great number of students who join the universities. [passage omitted]

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Inside the universities we have taken all required measures to provide normal conditions inside and outside the universities and labs. The Interior Ministery and local communities will take care of defending the universities. The government has taken all the necessary measures, taking into consideration the new situation our sector is experiencing.

We should not forget that the state and government have created 1,500 new posts for the people who would be in charge of inspection, guarding, and implementing these measures, which are liable to ensure strong security for the universities. Moreover, these days the government will give us over 100 posts in addition to the 1500 posts as soon as we implement the new system, according to which each university has its own security teams on a permanent bases, not only for this period but also for the future. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified correspondent] There is now talk that hundreds of Algerian university teachers and doctors and even foreign university assistants have left the Algerian university. Would you give us an official assessment of the number—first the Algerian cadres and then the foreign assistants?

[Benbouzid] When we talk about the leaving of some of our teachers as well as foreign assistants, we have to say this: The overall number of university teachers in the higher education sector on the national level is 18,000 teachers. The number of Algerian university teachers who left the country is about 1,000, the number of the foreign teachers is about 300, (?so) 1,300 teachers have left but the overall number is 18,000. Therefore, I can say that the majority of our teachers, despite the difficulties, are still in the homeland, inside the universities and inside the higher schools and institutes of the higher education. [passage omitted] At the same time I would like to say that when each Algerian leaves the country, regardless of his position, he leaves great emptiness in our heart and in our society because each Algerian is our son. [passage omitted]

We would like to call on all Algerians who have qualifications and who have obtained higher diplomas in higher education, who are working in all sectors, to help us within the framework of cooperation with universities. We will also help them with all the existing finance available to our ministry. [passage omitted]

When we look at the total number of the teachers who have left and compare it with those who stayed inside our universities' departments, we could say that those who have medical qualifications were the ones who have left the country in big numbers. But as far as other subjects are concerned, we do not see these problems. Therefore, we have difficulties in the sector of medicine, but this does not pose a great problem. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Sifi on Berber Language Demands, Other Issues

LD2609135794 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Report by Hocine Bourada on the third day of meetings by the Economic and Social Council]

[Text] [Words indistinct] the brother listeners. A short while ago Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi addressed the Economic and Social Council members and touched on the immediate issues in the national arena.

Concerning the dialogue, Mokdad Sifi pointed out that among the important (?issues) is that we should find a way to stop violence.

In his address, the head of government pointed out that those who hesitated and did not suggest anything were damaging the future of the country.

Mokdad Sifi also pointed out that the aim of the dialogue is to reach national concord, and recalled what head of state Liamine Zeroual said that the crisis was political and could only be solved politically.

Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi talked about the Thamazighth [Berber] language, saying that some political leaders were pushing the inhabitants of two or three provinces to boycott their studies and transform that into a general strike. The head of government stressed that using language for political purposes was harming the country at the present time.

Still talking about the Thamazighth language, Mokdad Sifi said in his statement that he had asked the interior minister to appoint a national commission to study ways of including the Thamazighth language in the school curriculum in the region where Thamazighth was spoken. Regarding Thamazighth, the prime minister said that its message had been received and that students should return to their desks for the good of the country. He also said that it is a national issue which must not be exploited and used for furthering personal interests.

Mokdad Sifi said that the wages of 130,000 workers in the building sector had been settled. He also said that the government had allocated 4 billion dinars to the agricultural sector for the current season.

The head of government also talked about the allocation of another financial package estimated at 8 billion Algerian dinar for replanting woodlands destroyed by fire.

Regarding his government's forecast of economic growth, Mokdad Sifi pointed out that a 3 percent growth was expected this year, without taking into consideration oil and agriculture because they were subject to changes and fluctuations.

Presidency Spokesman Views Interparty Talks

LD2409151994 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1950 GMT 23 Sep 94

[Interview with Presidency spokesman Mihoub Mihoubi by journalist Mourad Chibine in the framework of the "Meeting With the Parties" program; in the studio on 23 September—recorded]

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[Excerpts] [Chibine] Welcome Mr. Mohoubi.

[Mihoubi] Thank you.

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, we agreed before the program that the interview will be frank and open. So is it possible to begin our interview by us asking a question about the fourth round of the dialogue which ended the day before yesterday? As far as this round is concerned, I think that three new developments emanated from it. First, the disagreement on a joint communique between the authorities and the parties in the meeting. Second, an agreement to hold bilateral meetings instead of multilateral meetings. Third, no timetable for future meetings was agreed upon. Can we construe the aforementioned as a crisis or as good signs for progress in the dialogue?

[Mihoubi] Thank you brother Mourad. First, one must make it clear that the dialogue is a continuous process. Therefore, one must not talk about a crisis as soon as dialogue is adjourned.

As far as the fourth round of the national dialogue between the presidency and a number of political parties which answered the the head of the state's invitation of 21 August, it is now behind us. We would have liked to agree upon a political statement or a joint communique. However, some parties thought it was premature and there was not full agreement on the points in the statements. Given that the dialogue was continuous and open to all the political classes in the country, we agreed to meet the wishes of those parties which did not want such a statement.

[Chibine] A number of papers said yesterday the disagreement on the joint statement revolved around its wording. Was the disagreement so deep that it could be a real hurdle or was it merely a technical hiccup which can be overcome in the next round of talks?

[Mihoubi] No. I believe that there are still basic issues behind the wording, but I believe that these basic issues can be overcome by continuing the dialogue and by all sides clarifying their positions, especially if everyone's sincere desire established to continue the dialogue and arrive at the result which is awaited by our people. It may just be the wording, but it hides differences in positions on some issues. A solution must be reached in the future, God willing.

[Chibine] May we know why bilateral meetings were chosen as the form for the next stage?

[Mihoubi] It is true that I have said or confirmed that the dialogue is continuing. This dialogue was taking place at two levels: the multilateral level at the meeting of the state presidency and the parties which responded to the invitation, and at the same time contacts with these parties and the parties which did not respond to the invitation were continuing. Thus the bilateral dialogue or contacts were continuing in addition to multilateral meetings. After four rounds of these multilateral meetings the parties decided that they must be given time to carry out in-depth consultations within the parties in the first instance, and at the same time to intensify contacts between them and the parties which did not respond to the invitation and parties involved in the national dialogue. We conceded to this desire; but this does not mean that contacts have been broken. On the contrary, God willing, in the near future we will intensify both multilateral and bilateral contacts with the parties which took part in the meeting.

[Chibine] You say that this will take place over the coming days. Will there be a period for reflection, or will these meetings take place next week, or the week after?

[Mihoubi] As for bilateral contacts, there is an agreement and a pressing desire on the part of the presidency to continue the bilateral contacts with the parties which participated in the previous four rounds of dialogue, and also with the parties which have not participated in these meetings. Accordingly, contacts are continuing and could be on daily basis. The presidency is completely open-minded about intensifying those contacts.

Concerning the contacts at the multilateral level, a date will be decided after consultations with the different sides. We hope that the forthcoming multilateral meeting will extend to include other sides which have not participated in these previous phases.

[Chibine] Will the citizens be informed of all the details of these bilateral meetings, as was the case with the multilateral meetings?

[Mihoubi] By God, your question is actually a good one. As you are aware, the head of state, Liamine Zeroual, is making certain that full openness will accompany the process of dialogue. And I think we have proved this at the presidency. We have kept the citizens informed of the details of the dialogue. We will, of course, continue this policy. Citizens and the whole Algerian people will be kept informed about all the contacts which will take place bilaterally and/or multilaterally.

[Chibine] Is it possible to tell us what is new in the contacts with the parties which have stayed away from the dialogue, particularly with Messrs 'Ali Belhadj and 'Abassi Madani? Have there been any further contacts with them since Mr. 'Abassi Madani's recent letter?

[Mihoubi] I would like to remind here that contacts began after the first round of talks which took place on 21 August. They began after the aforementioned letter from Mr. 'Abassi Madani reached the presidency and the parties which were engaged in the dialogue on 23 August. Our reading of the letter led us to believe that there were some positive signs which convinced everyone, including the presidency. On the basis of this initiative by Mr. 'Abassi Madani contacts were established between the presidency and those who were detained in the Blida prison. Good intentions were reaffirmed by subsequent contacts and correspondence. Thus, once we received, on 6 September, the letter which was signed by

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the five leaders in Blida prison, who unanimously expressed their wish to contribute to appeasing the situation by trying to put an end to the bloodshed and by restoring normality, we became convinced that it was necessary and it the state's duty to give them an opportunity to carry out the necessary contacts in order to fulfill their pledges. And this is what has happened.

[Chibine] Have those contacts taken place or not? And are there any signs of the contribution this has made?

[Mihoubi] Whatever the case, the state has provided all the conditions to enable Mr. Abassi Madani and his comrades to make all the contacts they deem necessary in order to arrive at agreement among the leaders of the dissolved party and to clearly express their position on the crisis which the country is experiencing. They require time for this. They have been given this time and we are waiting for them to set out their position.

[Chibine] Mr Mihoubi, yesterday we heard Mr. Said Khelil of the Socialist Forces Front [FFS] saying in his address: We do not know exactly what is going on at present between the authorities and the dissolved party, the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]; is it bilateral negotiations, some recipe which the two sides are trying to come up with?

Do you think that such a position is a result of misinformation about what is going on? It is being said that there was no transparency on this point.

[Mihoubi] The truth is that regarding the state's duties and its commitment to transparency in running the dialogue, I believe that it has fulfilled its obligation with complete objectivity and sincerity and has informed the public and the political class about all the details which were dealt with or reviewed in this dialogue, whether the collective dialogue or the bilateral contacts.

I believe that in this respect the state can not rightly be reproached. Regarding the point about what the national press sometimes reports on the negotiations with the leaders of the dissolved party and so on, I have previously said, and the state presidency has announced completely clearly and frankly in the various communiques issued during the dialogue—and the parties participating in the dialogue were also given all the details—I would like to be clear about this, the issue here involves the initiative of Mr. Abassi Madani after the dialogue had begun on 21 August.

This initiative took the form of the letter which he sent to the head of state on 23 August, with copies sent to the parties. We announced this in the official communiques issued by the state presidency. [passage omitted]

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, regarding the FFS, are contacts still continuing with it and can you tell us what the essential differences are which led to the absence of the FFS up to now from the multilateral meetings?

[Mihoubi] Regarding contacts with the FFS leadership, as I have said—and also in relation to the other parties—Ettahadi and the Rally for Culture and Democracy [RCD], contacts continued on the initiative of the state presidency because these parties were also invited to participate in the dialogue just as they were invited last March to a number of meetings with the state presidency. We announced this perfectly clearly. I do not think that there is anything which is hidden from the public. We have maintained transparency because of our convictions, responsibility, and eagerness to inform the citizen, who in the end have to make the decision.

So contacts continued. Why does the FFS not participate in the dialogue now? I believe you have heard them expressing their stance on a number of occasions and I do not think it necessary to go back to this. But I would just like to take this opportunity to explain that one of the criticisms we hear is that there is no transparency, which is absolutely mistaken.

[Chibine] Do you think that the door is still open for those parties to joint the dialogue?

[Mihoubi] Of course, of course. The door is still open simply because those parties are national parties. And, therefore, they have an interest in national problems. The crisis facing the country is their's and therefore it is their duty, as the country's political vanguards, to be interested in the problems facing the whole nation and to try to resolve them through proposals, discussions, and dialogue. They should shoulder their responsibilities. This should be a foregone conclusion. Furthermore, I do not think that any political force in any country, which believes in representing the interests of a given social stratum, should not shoulder its responsibilities, regardless of the circumstances, and should not fulfill its national obligation.

[Chibine] Do you think that the dialogue will only take place on the sacrosanct principles laid down by the head of state or not?

[Mihoubi] I think that such principles and such a framework, which has been in the news day in and day out, are not laid down by the state or by the presidency. On the contrary, they were laid down by the people.

There is one framework—the constitution. It includes what we call the national sacrosanct principles. I believe that no fruitful dialogue can take place if it is not held within the framework of an agreed procedure. This is not a bazaar in which everyone can put in whatever he likes. There is the state, the society, the institutions, and the laws. Therefore, I believe it is necessary for everyone to commit himself to the platform of the dialogue. Otherwise, every time we have a dialogue or a meeting we will have to reconsider fundamentally our stances, principles, and laws. [passage omitted]

[Chibine] There is another point related to the appeasement measures. On the one hand, do you think that they

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are sufficient, and on the other, what are you getting in return? Is anything being given in return for these measures by the other side?

[Mihoubi] First, it has to be made clear that the state is not negotiating about the basic concerns of the country and about basic matters covered by the constitution and the various laws of the republic.

The measures which have been taken to create an atmosphere for holding the dialogue were actually taken by the state some time ago when it took over its responsibilities within the context of this transitional period. A number of measures were taken which were included in some of the proposals and demands made by some parties at the beginning of the year, before the transitional period. But when these demands were made again it became clear to everyone that the majority of them had already been carried out by the state.

[Chibine] And on the other hand?

[Mihoubi] There is no other hand. I have said that the state has responsibilities and duties toward its citizens and its political community. It has shouldered these responsibilities at what it considered to be the appropriate time and I believe that this is clear.

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, to go back to the introduction with which we began, as you mentioned, many politicians say that when there are a number of sides and each of them feels that it has suffered an injustice and that it is in the right, a thorny problem arises when all the parties feel an injustice. I think that the state presidency is now standing in a critical position between two sides which are basically incompatible: the side which is known as the democratic axis, on the one hand, and the side which sees the Islamic solution as the complete solution to, or final way out of the crisis, on the other. In dealing with these two sides, how do you try to mediate between them without distancing one of them?

[Mihoubi] I would like to point out here that it is not in the interests of the state to exclude any party in the country. Rather, it is the state's duty to rally all citizens and to conduct its business on the basis of a common denominator between the interests of individuals and the various strata. It is natural that contradicting interests should be a contentious matter between members of society.

Contradictions are found in all societies. The Algerian citizen should remember this. At a certain stage we tried to forge a national concord around a number of principles and ignored, for a long time, the natural differences which are common to any society. [passage omitted]

Now we are faced with the problem of how to overcome contradictions in our society. I believe that the common denominator should be something which everyone can agree on. And it is the duty of the state's institutions to consecrate people's agreement.

The state does not exclude anyone and is not trying to exclude anybody. The state is the state of all Algerians and the national institutions are everyone's. Whenever there is a conflict of interests it is the state's duty to find a common denominator or platform which is acceptable to the majority of citizens. This is the true task of institutions in a democratic system which should take into account the various interests and viewpoints within society. In doing this, I do not think that the state is embarrassed and will not be embarrassed.

One problem remains however. It is the contradiction between what you called two opposite parties. One is called democratic and the other one Islamist. We would like to recall here that we were going through a transitional period. It is the tasks of the transitional period to render the situation normal again and to calm it down. The people should have the last word. The sovereign people should have the right to make the final decision. I do not think that it is in anyone's interest nor is it possible for anyone to impose upon the whole of Algerian society something which he thinks is better. The tasks of the transitional period is to make the situation normal once again, to return to the electoral process, and to give the final word to the sovereign people.

[Chibine] But from the purely procedural aspect, do you think that the authorities now find themselves in a critical position? Bullets have spoken in this country and blood has flowed. From the procedural aspect how can we arrive at this? Will this problem which has occurred over the last two years not be put forward for discussion?

[Mihoubi] No. I do not believe that the position is critical. Perhaps it is difficult to deal with the situation because things have become complicated, problems have accumulated, and the right solutions were not found at the right time. While I can possibly agree with you that there may be accumulated problems and that during this transitional period the state has found itself in a position which may be difficult, this does not mean its position is critical. [passage omitted]

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, in the light of the inconsistencies we have just talked about, is there within the regime a unanimity about the strategy and the method being adopted now to reach a solution to the crisis?

[Mihoubi] Naturally. To be honest, I am rather astonished by this question because we are talking about the Algerian state and what is taking place now stems from the conviction of a patriotic leadership which is loyal to this nation and loyal to the country and a leadership which assumed its responsibilities in very difficult circumstances. I do not think that the question is relevant. Unfortunately, this is the question which we sometimes see in the foreign press or the tendentious press which probably does not wish Algeria any good. However, when we hear such words from Algeria's children, we find it regrettable. In his first meeting with the parties which took part in the dialogue, the president clearly and categorically said that in his capacity as head of state,

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minister of defense, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he assumes responsibility for leading the national dialogue and he is committed to all the results which, God willing, will come out of this national dialogue. Consequently, this is only—and allow me to say it—a repeat of what we hear every now and then from the tendentious circles which do not wish this country any good.

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, I am now going to ask a question which I hope will not be a repetition of similar matters. Now, after the fourth round of dialogue, what will the anticipated future stages be like in your opinion? What steps will you take in the immediate future?

[Mihoubi] I believe that to some extent we answered this question at the beginning because as I have said, the dialogue is continuing and the state is completely resolute. The head of state is personally eager that the dialogue should continue until, God willing, we reach the desired results awaited by our people. [passage omitted]

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi,let us be optimistic for a minute and let us say that the dialogue took place, results were achieved, and an agreement reached on a timetable for the management of the transitional period. What guarantees can the authorities give for the implementation of such an agreement and will this agreement be binding for the entire political community in Algeria?

[Mihoubi] It is not a question of the agreement being binding because I believe that an agreement is meaningful and effective when it is supported by a consensus and a commitment to implement what has been agreed upon. Consequently, we are anxious to achieve this consensus and obtain the commitment of everybody and their adherence to the terms of the agreement and the latter's implementation on the ground. Naturally, there should be a commitment on the implementation of such an agreement.

As far as the state is concerned, I have said that the president of state stressed to the parties that were present his personal commitment, his commitment as head of state and his commitment as minister of national defense, that he will do everything necessary to implement any agreement aimed at solving this crisis, turning the situation back to normal and restoring the democratic process.

[Chibine] There is also a question about reports circulating in some newspapers of the existence of interference from foreign powers, or from some foreign countries. There are some who say that various solutions are being suggested to Algeria by one country or another. What is your reaction to this? Is there actually any influence or advice being offered to Algeria by other parties?

[Mihoubi] By God, first, I hope that such queries and arguments do not emanate from the national arena. I think that the Algerian people and their political class have enough awareness and concern for the national interests and the sovereignty of their decision to prevent such rumors from emanating from them. Every now and then, we hear that pressure is being put on the Algerian state to widen its base and allow for the participation of some side in some of the talks, etc. This is completely untrue. It is untrue, and we would not accept it. The issue is connected with an Algerian crisis between the offspring of Algeria, and the head of state has affirmed this in all his interventions, particularly in the international arena. You recall that the head of state has certain duties outside Algeria, and he has touched upon this isssue among the international community as a warning to those who are tempted to interfere in the internal affairs of Algeria. Algeria has sacrificed a lot for the sake of regaining its independence and freedom of decision. Irrespective of the difficulty of this phase, I do not think that it is ready to sacrifice this valuable and precious gain which all Algerian people were keen on. [passage omitted]

[Chibine] Mr. Mihoubi, given the difficult situation facing Algeria, there are many questions for which the viewers would like to see answered. In order not to muddle the topics I think we should leave them for another opportunity. However, as we are talking about the national dialogue and trying to evaluate the outcome of the fourth round, the final question is about the future of this process. Citizens are wondering what the chances are for a successful outcome of the dialogue?

[Mihoubi] All the chances are there. This is a national problem. And I think every Algerian is keen to see this dialogue succeed. I think the situation facing the country compels us all to exert further efforts to extricate ourselves from it. I believe the matter is now is in the hands of every citizen and of all the country's political classes; they should work to save the country and get it out of its current crisis. There is hope; there is no future without hope. Algeria, as I said before, has a good status. And thanks to its people and to its material resources the potentials are there for a strong and modern state. [passage omitted]

Military Command Approves of Dialogue

MM2709085794 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 25 Sep 94 p 1

[Report by Qusayy Salih al-Darwish: "Algerian Sources Confirm Chief of Staff's Return From Paris. Zeroual Favors Bilateral Contacts. No Disagreement Within Army Over Dialogue"]

[Excerpt] San Sebastian—Informed sources have confirmed that Algerian Chief of Staff Major General Mohamed Lamari returned to Algeria from Paris the day before yesterday after nine days in the French capital. His return came a day after AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT and the French paper LIBERATION reported his absence from Algeria.

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The same sources said that Maj. Gen. Lamari paid three visits to Paris in one month, but they did not say if these visits had anything to do with the political situation in Algeria or not.

Other sources rule out the possibility of differences within the Algerian military command over what has taken place so far, and they maintain that the military command approves of what has happened, although that does not mean that there are no fundamental differences regarding continuation of the dialogue in the next phase.

On the matter of the dialogue and the question of setting a date for a new session, President Zeroual is in no hurry at present and in fact he prefers bilateral contacts on two parallel lines, one in the direction of the [Islamic] Salvation Front [FIS] and the other in the direction of Hocine Ait Ahmed, leader of the Socialist Forces Front, who at this stage prefers bilateral contacts to meetings that would bring him together with five, six, or seven parties. [passage omitted]

GIA— 'Mujahidin' Will Comply With FIS Decision

MM2609185094 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Sep 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "'Salvation Army' in Central Region: We Will Comply With What the Permanent Leadership Decides"]

[Text] London—Some circles in the Algerian regime are casting doubt on the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] leaders' ability to curb the armed Islamic groups' defiance, persuade them to negotiate with the regime, or "announce a truce" with the armed forces loyal to the authorities. This doubt is attributable to the circles' belief that the FIS has become several fronts. And that the "Armed Islamic Group" [GIA] has become a difficult element on the armed action scene, since it announces and emphasizes on every occasion its rejection of even the possibility of discussing dialogue with the regime.

But leading figures in the armed wing belonging to the FIS have stressed that this doubt is exaggerated and that the "mujahidin" will comply with what FIS leader Cheikh Abassi Madani, his deputy Cheikh Ali Belhadj, and the "Shura Council" decide. The leading figures told AL-HAYAH in London over the telephone that the "Islamic Salvation Army [ISA] is the FIS' armed wing. It complies with (what is decided by) the FIS' permanent leadership, headed by Cheikhs Madani and Belhadj and the Shura Council."

The importance of the leading figures' statements lies in the fact that they are speaking from the central region, where the GIA seems to have substantial influence. The eastern and western regions have on more than one occasion emphasized their loyalty to Cheikhs Madani and Belhadj. And the "amirs" of the eastern and western regions in the ISA have repeatedly urged the central region to unite its ranks, choose a leadership, and cooperate with the representatives of the eastern and western regions in the framework of the endeavors to achieve "unity among the the mujahidin."

Asked about the current situation in the central region and the lack of a unified leadership for the Front there, a leading figure in the FIS' armed wing told AL-HAYAH that "armed action began on all Algerian territory after the elections were canceled in 1992. At the time the mujahidin were not operating within the framework of a definite organization. They were FIS members or supporters." He added that armed action began to be organized within the framework of the "Armed Islamic Movement." Then an independent framework, namely the GIA, emerged from the FIS. Then the ISA emerged. One opposition source pointed out that leading FIS figures assumed the task of organizing supporters in the eastern and western regions. "But it is noted that about 90 percent of the FIS leaders were absent in the central region, because some had died and others had been captured—which disrupted matters. However, many brothers remain prepared to work within the ISA framework."

The leading figure said that those in charge of armed action in this region have suffered substantial casualties. He added: "Despite that, young men have emerged, determined to take responsibility for restructuring the ISA. With God's help, the groups have been unified. And a national conference will be held to appoint a leadership for the ISA (in the central region) and to appoint an amir."

He also said that "the ISA and the GIA are operating in that region. And there are frameworks in the GIA from among the FIS' sons. Thus we believe that there is no difference between the ISA and the GIA."

Asked about the authorities' decision to release the FIS leaders, he said that the step "is one of the jihad's fruits. Because the apostate regime would not have taken this decision had it not been for the intensity of the jihad."

Asked whether the central region would comply with what the FIS leaders might decide to do and with a possible "truce," he said that the ISA is the FIS' armed wing. "We recognize the permanent leadership headed by Cheikhs Madani and Belhadj and the Shura Council." He stressed compliance with the decisions issued by the "permanent leadership."

In the meantime the GIA remains committed to its position, rejecting dialogue with the regime. In an "analytical study" of developments in the situation in Algeria, it believes that the FIS's fate "will be no better than that of Ennahda or HAMAS" if it enters a dialogue with the regime "to share power." It said that the "two parties to the battle" in Algeria are the Army under President Liamine Zeroual and the "mujahidin represented in the GIA." The study issued on 22 September—a copy of which AL-HAYAH has received—says that the FIS "is not qualified legally to negotiate or to enter a

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dialogue with the apostate regime." It said that there was no "legal justification" for setting up the ISA.

Will Accept a 'Legitimate Solution'

MM2609144094 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Sep 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Jamal Khashuqji: "Guemazi Tells AL-HAYAH: Islamic Group Will Accept a Legitimate Solution in Algeria"]

[Excerpt] London—Cheikh Kamel Guemazi, one of the three [Algerian] Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] leaders released from Blida prison recently, has stressed that the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] will accept a "legitimate solution" in Algeria. He told AL-HAYAH over the telephone that the Front is waiting for the Algerian authorities to release all its cadres and to facilitate the convening of a meeting of the leadership of its political and jihad wings.

Guemazi, who was elected chairman of the council for the Algerian capital before his arrest in June 1991, added that the FIS will not make any radical decision until it is legally rehabilitated and the decision to disband it is rescinded. He stressed that the Front "comprising its political and jihad wings" will meet only within the framework of the Front's legitimacy, not secretly.

Guemazi, who said that he was conveying "the view of the brothers who were with me in prison and of those with whom we met recently," declined to define the Front's position on important issues concerning the resolution of the current crisis, notably the declaration of a truce, participation in dialogue, acceptance of a transitional phase before elections, or agreement to a presidential election. He said that "it is premature to raise these issues before the FIS leadership's meeting, which will include not only the Front's former shura council but also the leading elements that joined the Front after the cheikhs' arrest following the strike crisis in 1991, like the members of the Algerianization group, whose elements' membership was consolidated at the Batna meeting in fall 1991 before the elections. This is in addition to the Front's elected deputies and armed action leaders."

Guemazi stressed that this includes "the real GIA, not the imaginary one whose statements are issued by certain security organs." He also said that the Islamic groups [al-jama'at al-islamiyah] will submit to "a legitimate solution that resolves grievances, restores rights to their owners, and upholds justice. They will also then submit to the law, because they care about it more than anyone else." He added that there would be no agreement with the authorities either "except through the participation of all the FIS leaders, including those of the armed wing, whether in the GIA or elsewhere."

He denied the existence of serious splits in the Front's ranks. He described the situation as merely "a difference of opinion regarding the nature of action, especially in the current circumstances, which have prevented the brothers from meeting." On the existence of numerous quarters representing the Front abroad, he stressed that the Executive Council headed by Cheikh Rabeh Kebir is the Front's representative abroad, and that the Parliamentary Mission headed by Anouar Haddam belongs to the Council. He stressed that the Executive National Bureau continues to exist and to retain its legitimacy inside the country. The bureau is headed by Cheikh Abdelrazzak Radjam.

He declined to comment on the position of the "Islamic Society Movement" [HAMAS], which has announced its opposition to the armed elements' participation in the dialogue. He described its positions as "hesitant." He said that he and his two comrades Abdelkader Omar and Nouroddin Chigara, as well as Abdelkader Boukhamkham, are meeting continuously with Cheikhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj. [passage omitted]

FFS Leader Said To Represent 'Third Way'

MM2609141794 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 23 Sep 94 p 11

[Report by Alejandro V. Garcia: "Socialist Leader in Exile Calls in Granada for International Conference To Restore Peace to Algeria"]

[Text] Algerian Socialist Forces Front [FFS] Secretary Hocine Ait-Ahmed yesterday called in Almunecar (Granada), where he took part in a course on the crisis of the present-day world organized by the University of Granada, for the convening of an international conference to establish democracy in his country and restore peace to it. Ait-Ahmed advocated the "third way" represented by the Algerian socialists, and harshly criticized both the current government and the Islamic fundamentalists, with whom he even equated it.

The Algerian politician, who lives in exile in Switzerland, took care to draw a distinction between the necessary international cooperation to secure a "free, democratic, and pluralist" Algeria and interference in his country's internal affairs. Ait-Ahmed demanded treatment similar to that accorded by foreign governments to South Africa. He asserted that the belief that the Algerian economy can be revived in the current situation, which he described as a "pre-civil war" situation, is totally unrealistic.

"The perpetuation of the current situation, which can only lead to passive resistance and a social apathy incompatible with reviving the economy.... [as published] Only a representative government with a minimum degree of legitimacy can mobilize a population that believes in nothing," he added.

Ait-Ahmed advocated international assistance conditional on the opening of "a real negotiation for the return of civil peace and the setting under way of democratic institutions during the transition." He said that the European left must not stand aloof from the violation of

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human rights in his country. "Certain foreign governments' silence or unconditional support for the dictatorship makes them partners of an oppressive regime in the eyes of the Algerian population," he asserted, "but, above all," he continued, "deprives them of legitimacy to condemn the attacks against freedoms which the fundamentalists could commit if they attained power some day, or shared it with the most radical military personnel."

Leader of Third Way [subhead]

Ait-Ahmed presented himself during the discussion which followed his speech as one of the leaders of the "third way," which represents the only possibility to tackle the political crisis and guarantee democracy. "This way is no myth. It represents that silent majority who, despite the terror, have refused to align themselves with the government or with the fundamentalists."

He included in that majority the democratic forces, the cooperative movements, the trade unions, the state and Army officials, and the political parties. He said that the FFS' unshakable aims are to prevent one form of totalitarianism from replacing another and to give Algeria democratic means. "To say that the Islamic Salvation Front is the child of the National Liberation Front is unfortunately no mere slogan.... The methods used to combat fundamentalism have rather strengthened the fundamentalists," he added.

Renaissance, Renewal Leaders Discuss Dialogue

NC2509102194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0820 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Algiers, 25 Sep (MENA)—Shaykh Abdallah Djaballah, the leader of Algeria's Renaissance Movement, an Islamic group, has expressed the hope that the dialogue proposed by President Liamine Zeroual will end the violence in the country and the Algerian crisis.

In an interview with MENA's Algiers correspondent, Djaballah said that the bilateral meetings the Algerian president will hold with representatives of the opposition parties will help to overcome the obstacles that surfaced during four earlier rounds of talks, notably participation in the dialogue by the banned Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] and three other opposition parties, which have so far boycotted the talks.

Shaykh Djaballah denied that his party has been in touch with the recently released FIS leaders. He denied that he contacted Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who are under house arrest following their recent release from a jail in Blida. He noted that he contacted Ali Jidi and Abdelkader Bukhamkham, who were released three months ago in a government attempt to calm the situation in the country.

Asked to assess previous rounds of talks between the government and the opposition, Djaballah remarked that the circumstances are conducive to the success of the dialogue, although many obstacles remain. He said he hopes these obstacles will be surmounted.

Concerning the lack of trust between the government and the opposition parties, he said that recent talks have helped considerably to ease this feeling. He declared that if all the parties overcome the mistrust barrier the crisis could end. The Renaissance leader said the authorities have frequently confirmed that the government is united in its decision to conduct a dialogue with the opposition. He said that President Zeroual has frequently emphasized his commitment, as president and defense minister, to the outcome of the dialogue, seeing this as a way to end the crisis.

Algerian Renewal Party leader Noureddine Boukrouh has declared that his party opposes the participation of armed groups in the current dialogue, pointing out that their inclusion will provoke further crises and undermine the talks.

In a news conference last night, Boukrouh said that continuing the dialogue via bilateral meetings does not mean that earlier rounds failed. He pointed out that the five parties attending the talks have unanimously accepted the new dialogue formula.

Boukrouh added that FIS leaders Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj sent a message to President Zeroual on 6 September but asked him not to reveal its content.

Boukrouh revealed that his party strongly objected to the final statement issued after the fourth round of government-opposition talks last Tuesday, because it did not stipulate that any party wishing to join the dialogue should first renounce violence.

He added that his party strongly objected to the National Liberation Front's call to include the FIS in the dialogue without first asking it to issue a statement condemning violence. Boukrouh said the task of national dialogue is to prepare for the next parliamentary election in cooperation with the major Algerian parties. He said everyone agrees that the dialogue must succeed if the country is to be saved.

PRA Leader Opposes Armed Groups in Dialogue

LD2409204794 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] The leader of the Party of Algerian Renewal [PRA], Noureddine Boukrouh, held a news conference this evening to talk about the dialogue, its reality and prospects. On this occasion Mr. Boukrouh revealed the main point that prevented the release of a joint final communique at the end of the session held on 20 September. The disagreement was over the involvement of armed groups in the national dialogue. Such a request was opposed by the Party of Algerian Renewal, which regards the dialogue as political. According to Mr. Boukrouh, this issue caused a big argument between his party and the National Liberation Front [FLN].

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In his assessment of the stages of the national dialogue, Mr. Boukrouh said the dialogue had not failed and that the lack of agreement over the wording of a joint communique at the end of the fourth round of talks did not at all mean that the dialogue had failed, because, he added, its failure would not be in anybody's interest.

[Begin Boukrouh recording] The dialogue is continuing, and there is not a single Algerian who wishes to see this dialogue fail, even if that person is a hardliner or is opposed to the people taking part in the dialogue or the way the dialogue is being conducted. Nobody will gain anything from the failure of the dialogue, and nobody will benefit from a failure, no matter who they may be, even those who say that this dialogue is useless and you are going to hand the keys over to the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], or whatever. Nobody can do anything in this situation of crisis without means. We all know that even wars, any war in the world, end with a dialogue. Dialogue means an end to wars and dialogue is a means to avoid wars. We wanted to halt this state of war and the crisis we are enduring through dialogue. Nothing else can replace dialogue. There is no substitute for dialogue. Therefore everybody must join it. Even if the first initiatives fail and some attempts are unproductive, we must try again, as Algerians. We could still carry out acts of violence and we could raise temperatures, but once we have calmed down and once we have realized that we have lost even more than before, we will say let us talk again. [end recording]

Regarding the resumption of the dialogue in the shape of bilateral meetings, Mr. Boukrouh denied that these meetings would open the way to agreements between the state presidency and the banned Islamic Salvation Front at the expense of other parties. He pointed out that the decision to resume the dialogue in the shape of bilateral meetings had been agreed upon by the participants at the start of the session; in other words, before the proposal made by the head of state to release a joint communique at the end of the fourth round of talks.

Boukrouh said there were numerous ideas on how to find a solution, but what is the position of the Party of Algerian Renewal?

[Begin Boukrouh recording] What do we have now in Algeria? There are parties and there are ideas and solutions. We believe that Algeria today needs a solution, a compromise solution, because we believe, in the Party of Algerian Renewal, that the FIS does not hold the solution and will not come up with a solution. The authorities do not have the solution either, and have not come up with a solution and will not do so. The interests of the authorities and those of the FIS are specific. We believe the solution must supersede these interests and go beyond them both. This is what we think. This is what we are fighting for. Now this one has lost the battle and the other has also lost the battle; it is good because that defeat forced them to understand that force is not constructive and will not lead to any results.

We are aware of what is happening on the ground, and we also know in what conditions the elections were held and in what conditions democracy was introduced in Algeria and what the state of mind of the Algerian voter was like in 1989, 1990, and 1991. We now know that the political maturity, political awareness, has changed. [end recording]

Further on Remarks

LD2409203694 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] Nourreddine Boukrouh held a news conference this afternoon. He is the leader of the PRA, the Party of Algerian Renewal. He tackled several issues, including the participation of armed groups in the dialogue. This is out of the question, the PRA leader said.

As for the next bilateral meetings, the PRA leader said that they are not the first of their kind. Similar meetings last March gathered the two sides, that is, the state president and political parties.

Boukrouh also talked about the last meeting at the president's office. A final joint communique was expected to mark the fourth round of talks. Differences appeared and could not be settled. Let us listen to Boukrouh's explanations:

[Begin Boukrouh recording] That is when the conflict—the extent of the difference between the views of our party and other political parties—appeared. I can tell you that our party, the PRA, firmly opposed the new setup [mouture] because we believed that this new setup did not meet one of the fundamental conditions for this dialogue: The condemnation of violence as a prerequisite for participation in the dialogue. The new setup reduced the framework of the dialogue as it has been presented to all, that is, the parties that took part in the dialogue and public opinion. [sentence as heard] [end recording]

Haddam Insists on Government 'Guarantees'

MM2309152094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Sep 94 p 3

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq: "Anouar Haddam Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Will Not Participate in the Algerian Dialogue Without Guarantees"]

[Text] Washington—Anouar Haddam, head of the Parliamentary Mission of the Algerian [Islamic] Salvation Front [FIS] abroad, has confirmed that FIS is still awaiting the guarantees it requested from the government, that these guarantees have not been provided yet, and that FIS therefore cannot participate in the dialogue, the fourth session of which was concluded the day before yesterday. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT from his U.S. headquarters about the latest developments pertaining to FIS' participation in the dialogue, he said: "We wish that the regime would provide these

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guarantees. Perhaps the coming days will witness developments in the direction of what we hope for in the interests of ending the crisis."

He added: "We still request that all FIS leaders and members including Cheikh Abbassi Madani, his deputy Cheikh Ali Belhadj, and the mujahidin or their representatives should be granted and guaranteed such rights as freedom, protection, and security so that a consensus can be reached on a formula that would lead to a just and lasting solution."

He continued: "We can say that those trying to prevent any party—the FIS, the mujahidin, or any other influential political force—from participating in drafting the solution are in fact trying to prolong and complicate the bloody crisis. We know that some generals do not want a solution to the crisis."

On his assessment of the developments in general and the chances of a solution, he said: "Frankly we are hopeful, but so long as we have no guarantees from the generals there can be no trust. Dialogue [should be] with whomever holds the real power, and he has not yet appeared or shown any interest in dialogue." Haddam added: "In the coming days we will wait for the green light from Cheikh Abbassi Madani in the course of developments to issue a statement expressing the FIS position."

Haddam declined to comment on the resignation of the Algerian Government's official spokeswoman. He said: "It is too early to comment because of the sensitivity of that and other issues."

On the cancellation of the lecture he was supposed to deliver in London yesterday (Wednesday), he said: "The lecture was not cancelled but postponed because of the circumstances and developments related to the crisis." He expected the FIS Parliamentary Mission to begin contacts with U.S. congressmen and members of the Clinton administration toward the end of this week, because they are now preoccupied with the situation in Haiti.

Unanimous Election to IAEA Board Reported

LD2509135394 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Algeria was unanimously elected to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency during its 38th regular session held in Geneva. Souad Selimi will tell us how the voting went:

[Begin Selimi recording] Algeria was unanimously elected to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] during its 38th regular session held in Geneva. This rotating post this year went to Africa for the period 1994-96. In addition to Algeria, three other states put themselves forward for the three posts reserved for the African continent, and they are Morocco, Ghana and Sudan.

It is worth noting that the minister of higher education and scientific research, Mr. Boubekeur Benbouzid, was very active on the sidelines of this session since he signed several agreements relating to nuclear safety. He also met the heads of the Chinese and Argentinian delegations and the South African foreign minister. Mr. Benbouzid also held talks with the IAEA director-general and made, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, a statement in which he stressed Algeria's commitment to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. [end recording]

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Joined

LD2709090194 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Algeria has officially announced its decision to join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. This was declared yesterday by Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri to the UN General Assembly in New York.

Egypt

Musa Discusses Iran, Sudan, Iraq, Lockerbie

NC2609172794 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 24 Sep 94 p 5

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Salah-al-Din Hafiz in Cairo; date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Hafiz] Looking at the International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD], let us discuss some issues, especially Egyptian-Iranian relations in light of the coordination that took place between the two delegations and your meeting with Iranian delegation leader Taskhiri and his positive statements. The Egyptian and Arab people were surprised by Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's negative statements on ties with Egypt. What is behind all this and what is the future of these relations?

[Musa] There was good cooperation between us at the ICPD. Taskhiri is a good, learned man and he led the Iranian delegation in a manner that encountered satisfaction and understanding. He left, praising the Egyptian stances on the conference and its topics.

The French newspaper LE FIGARO carried an interview with Hashemi- Rafsanjani, which harmed Egypt, but Shaykh Taskhiri told me the interview was conducted before the conference and was published during its session. In my view all this does not conceal that the Iranian stances represent double standards, which makes it difficult to reach firm understanding and agreement on the Iranian proposals. This is the truth.

[Hafiz] But an official statement was released from Tehran after Hashemi-Rafsanjani's interview criticizing the ICPD document.

[Musa] Every country, including Egypt, has every right to criticize this document. This stance should not be

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taken as a criticism of Iran or any other country. This document does not express Cairo's view, although it was issued where the conference was held, in Cairo. We should not be sensitive about any criticism of the document, with which we did not agree outright.

[Hafiz] In light of all this, will Egyptian-Iranian relations improve soon?

[Musa] It is natural, rather, required that these relations be good. We have differed with Iran on the political approach regionally and internationally; we view the world from a broader and more comprehensive perspective. The reason is that the situation in the Middle East and elsewhere requires a wise and objective vision, not one of violence that harms the region for example. We can hold a dialogue and discuss this issue. We can discuss Gulf events, especially the Arab islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates and that are occupied by Iran, Abu Musa, Tunb al-Kubra, and Tunb al-Sughra, or stability and development.

Our stance calls for halting acts that destabilize this situation, cause divisions, and hamper development. There is another view that we are undergoing transformation and progress, which means that we will go on like this. Here lies the contentious point. The world is progressing fast and we must keep pace with the world's progress as we go along. This is not against Islam. Islam urges progress. But from the objective point of view it is unacceptable for us to link ourselves with people and views that seek inertness and instability. How can we remain behind the rest of the world, when there are various methods and concepts that we can discuss? What is important is to initiate a dialogue. For example, Iran has its own view on the current peace process and it has the right to oppose or agree on it; it is not our role to impose on Iran any view or policy.

In return, Iran has no reason to tell an Arab or Islamic country how to govern itself and how to devise its policy. We can discuss every point of difference without imposing a predetermined view. I told Velayati this clearly and said it to Taskhiri recently. While this status remains and the Iranian policy of double standards continues, we are in no hurry. We can wait.

[Hafiz] Frankly, Minister, do Egyptian relations with Gulf states further strain Egyptian-Iranian relations?

[Musa] Absolutely not, because these relations are not targeted against Iran. But to put things right in the equation, Iran should review some of its political practices that harm us and the Gulf states.

[Hafiz] Allow me to move to another hot issue—Egyptian- Sudanese relations. This is a sensitive issue that causes concern. Does Egypt have a particular initiative or vision of how to resolve the dispute that emerged between the two brothers lately?

[Musa] Of course we have a vision. Egypt and Sudan should be the two sides of one coin. Anything different would be a historic mistake. For instance, when the Hala'ib issue was raised, I was surprised. I asked what borders they were discussing. Egypt's border should be "Juba" at the southernmost point of Sudan, while Sudan's border should be Alexandria, at the northernmost point of Egypt. But the brothers in Sudan must deal with the Egyptians as a people and not on a formal level, so as to maintain communication between the two peoples. Regrettably they assumed a strange position, like that when they seized the homes of some Egyptians on the eve of 'Id. This shows a lack of goodwill and creates a bone of contention.

[Hafiz] What is the central cause of the dispute then?

[Musa] It is the political line. The Sudanese Government still assumes positions with which we disagree. This sees things develop into an intellectual clash. This is what happened with Iran. But if Iran has the necessary resources to play that role, why should the Sudanese Government play this role on top of all its complicated problems—the problem of the south, the socioeconomic crisis, the indebtedness, or its strained relations with the world? It should have watched out for that to avoid the repercussions and spare its people the difficulty, instead of using cliches. It is wrong to imagine that with all these problems they can affect any state. This is the basic difference—the political line.

[Hafiz] Is this due to the dual nature of the regime in Sudan, which is shared between the National Islamic Front and the military?

[Musa] This is possible. Judging by the many developments, we understand that the current led by Hasan al-Turabi is playing a role in the crisis.

[Hafiz] What do you think of the recent American statement that a specific camp was monitored in Sudan that trains extremists and exports them to other states?

[Musa] The training of extremists in Sudan is closely monitored, not only by Western states, but by Arab and Islamic states as well. There are increasing signs that these camps exist, with or without the knowledge of the Sudanese Government. But the issue should be given the attention it deserves.

[Hafiz] Do you believe that the capture of international terrorist Carlos in Khartoum, where he had been living, and handing him over to France is part of a process to spread terrorism in the region?

[Musa] The fact that Carlos lived in Sudan for ten months creates certain impressions. Since he lived so long in Sudan others may still be living there.

[Hafiz] Is there a possibility for new overtures toward Sudan in the near future? What about Arab mediation efforts in this respect?

[Musa] First, let us close the door on attempts. Second, I am still convinced that the special relationship between Egypt and Sudan needs good intentions. Though we

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appreciate any mediation efforts, we believe that this unique relationship does not need mediation efforts.

[Hafiz] Are there any arrangements for a meeting between you and the Sudanese foreign minister in the near future?

[Musa] Yes, arrangements are under way. I will meet with him in New York in the next few days on the sidelines of the UN meetings.

[Hafiz] But he wants to meet with you during your visit to Khartoum.

[Musa] I will first see him in New York and then in Khartoum. I would like to point out here that I did not visit Khartoum as scheduled because of Sudan's opposition to Egypt's joining the African preferential trade agreement, which, incidentally, is collapsing. This is the difference between our policy and Sudan's. We have never stood against Sudan in any international forum. The UN Security Council was about to meet to condemn Sudan over violations of human rights, but President Mubarak's position was clear and firm against that stance at the economic and social council regarding human rights. We opposed condemning Sudan and we were the only Arab country to oppose the stance of the World Bank and the IMF against Sudan. Egypt's stance is not to vote for any resolution or measure that may endanger the Sudanese people or their reputation or affect their future. This is a firm principled stand regardless of political differences. It stems from our principles and awareness of history, unlike the Sudanese Government's stance on the preferential trade agreement. In addition, we have four million Sudanese brothers of all affiliations, from the north and south, living among us without any segregation. So it is illogical for certain parties in Sudan to claim that Egypt embraces and incites the Sudanese opposition as this would mean that almost one third of the Sudanese people are out of the country to form an opposition abroad.

[Hafiz] Let us move to another topic, namely the peace talks. Does Egypt have a new role and vision in the equation of the Arab- Israeli peace?

[Musa] Yes. Of course we have a new role as partners with the cosponsors of the peace process. Egypt is the largest country in the region and if we emerge from the bottleneck we will be the largest economic market in the region. Under all circumstances, Egypt has a clear interest in a climate of peace and stability. We do not fear Israel if we proceed on a sound path. It is high time that the situation in the Middle East changes through peace. We started this process since the days of President al-Sadat and we are fully aware of the movement of history. There is a new international situation and the current challenge lies in establishing stability, prosperity, and justice which require solving pending problems on the basis of full Israeli withdrawal from Syria and Lebanon and from the rest of the self-rule areas so that they can become a state. The world cannot talk of a new climate based on trade, investment, and exchange of common interests when peace is not established. Given our awareness of history and acting to achieve these goals without political or ideological rigidity, we will try to complete the peace process and close the file of the Arab-Israeli conflict so that the region may cope with the world race for progress and development. In the past the Egyptian role stemmed from a certain national necessity of securing Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. Having achieved this, this role now stems from a certain regional and pan-Arab necessity of establishing peace. We are helping the Palestinians in their negotiations because we believe that the first step of the self-rule in Gaza and Jericho will lead to the establishment of a full Palestinian state.

[Hafiz] How do you view the situation on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Musa] There is relaxation on this track and the negotiating framework has become clear. Syria wants a full withdrawal from the Golan, Israel wants full normalization of relations, and the U.S. Administration serves as a mediator in this regard.

[Hafiz] What about the Egyptian role? Does it complement or help the U.S. role?

[Musa] If the U.S. role is positive we could then say that the Egyptian role would complement and assist it. This is because peace is an Arab process and we have interest in it. I see no offense in this. Our role is to achieve Arab interest, peace, and Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories.

[Hafiz] Did the other parties, especially Israel, become fully convinced of the course of history and of the prerequisites for peace?

[Musa] Yes. There is awareness. Israel fully understands the course of history in the world.

[Hafiz] What are the recent developments in the status of Jerusalem, for example?

[Musa] The status of Jerusalem is a thorny issue. Our position on this issue is completely clear. We said that the Palestinians and the Israelis decided to leave the issue of Jerusalem to the final stage of negotiations. This obliges Israel not to make any geographic, demographic, or legal changes to the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, all the Jordanian, Palestinian, Israeli, Arab, and Islamic stands should be made clear at the negotiating table. Jerusalem has a special history and is significant for the three religions. We must, therefore, hold negotiations concerning this issue. We will not recognize any changes effecting the status of Jerusalem by Israel.

[Hafiz] A few days ago you made a surprise announcement about the possession of mass destruction weapons in the region with reference to Israel. What's new on this serious issue?

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[Musa] Preparations are under way at the United Nations to amend or extend the international Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. We spelled out our firm opinion regarding this issue, particularly since Israel is the only state possessing nuclear weapons in the region. The Israeli ambassador said in New York that Egypt has departed from its previous stands. But my response was firm and I said that we will never back down on this basic stand.

The Middle East cannot be renewed economically, culturally, and politically without providing the security. How could this be attained when Israel alone owns the mass destruction weapons and has not yet signed the NPT while many Arab countries have already signed. The continuation of this situation would upset the balance and would not help build the political, economic, or cultural stability.

A conference will be held next year to discuss the NPT and extend its mandate indefinitely. We, therefore, talk about the global participation in this treaty and to what extent the signatories are committed. Israel has not signed the treaty. It is excluded from the international inspection plan. We demand that Israel join the treaty. This is our firm stand in all international conferences and during our various exchanges. Our stand will even become clearer during the upcoming conference.

We previously refused to join the treaty on banning chemical weapons because Israel did not sign similar treaties. We refused to sign despite the pressure. Former President George Bush and French President Francois Mitterrand contacted President Mubarak to make Egypt sign the chemical treaty. But President Mubarak refused to do so and confirmed that the matter concerns Egypt's security and sovereignty as well as the security of the entire region. Israel must comply and sign so that there will be no exceptions. Israel must not be allowed to purchase weapons as it wants while at the same time we are asked to sign. We reject this because it will upset the balance. We will not accept it or any pressure.

[Hafiz] During your recent visit to Israel, we noticed that the Israeli press launched a broad attack against you. Why?

[Musa] I visited Israel. The major topic on the agenda was weapons of mass destruction, our stance, and Israel's stance on it. What was said about the program of the visit was blown out of proportion. We had no objection to visiting a memorial for victims who were killed unjustly. But this should have been done by agreement and protocol, not by surprise and embarrassment.

[Hafiz] Do you expect anything new on the Syrian-Israeli track during the new mission that U.S. envoy Dennis Ross is undertaking and the mission Secretary of State Warren Christopher will complete later?

[Musa] It is a complementary mission. But the general climate between Syria and Israel has changed and the tension has eased. Israel is pleased with President al-Asad's last speech about peace. But there is a lack of appreciation by Israel of the Syrian decisionmaking process. They say that President al-Asad alone controls decisions. They must understand that there are institutions, mechanisms, different views, and public opinion in Syria that should be convinced to change their position. What is offered in return? What is the price? The Syrians want all the Golan and full withdrawal. This is their right. The Israelis want normalization and security. All this is progress.

[Hafiz] We now move to the issue of inter-Arab relations. What is the truth about reconciliation efforts and where do they stand now?

[Musa] First, Arab reconciliation is a must and it will happen. Iraq is one problem, extremist political currents are another, and border disputes are a third. But all these problems are within our capability.

The issue of Saddam Husayn and his aggression on Kuwait is a sensitive one. Our clear and declared stance is that Iraq should distinctly recognize Kuwait as an independent and sovereign state that has clear and recognized borders. This recognition is the real beginning of reconciliation. It is a condition for, not a result of, reconciliation.

[Hafiz] Does this mean that the objective conditions are not being met and that the time is not yet favorable for reconciliation?

[Musa] Reconciliation has prerequisites. Iraq should rectify its position frankly and basically.

[Hafiz] In this framework, is the issue of the international embargo on the two Arab peoples in Libya and Iraq being considered at Arab forums? Does Egypt have a particular vision of that?

[Musa] Of course we have a specific vision. Where Libya is concerned, the point we stress is that the sanctions against it should be tightened no more. What counts after that is that Egypt is basically interested in finding the truth about the Lockerbie issue, either acquittal or condemnation. Libya recently put forward a new proposal when it accepted the trial of the two defendants in a third state, Holland, according to Scots Law. This is an important development in the Libyan stance. What is the basic issue here? Is it punishing Libya or looking for the truth in the blowing up of the Lockerbie plane?

Our viewpoint is that we should look for the truth. Trying the defendants will reveal the truth.

[Hafiz] What is the Western reaction to this development in the Libyan stance?

[Musa] The West is still reserved. We will try to improve the situation as much as we can. We will hold contacts and consultations in the coming days.

[Hafiz] What about the embargo on Iraq?

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[Musa] The situation is different here. The UN Security Council has imposed particular resolutions on Iraq and it should comply with them. But punishing the Iraqi people should stop. This is the responsibility of the Iraqi Government and president. Our distinct stance is that the fraternal Iraqi people do not deserve all this suffering. But the Iraqi regime is responsible for the continuing sanctions that harm the Iraqi people.

[Hafiz] Minister, how about the Damascus Declaration, is it still staggering, as you once put it?

[Musa] Actually the Damascus Declaration is being injected with vitality because of a renewed conviction among the member countries of the importance of this positive gathering. Why should we weaken it unnecessarily? At the core of that declaration is economic cooperation, not assistance. The interests are mutual. The security side is being implemented on a bilateral basis, according to how every country feels. Political coordination is proceeding in a satisfactory manner.

At the last meeting of the Damascus Declaration countries, we presented a working paper envisioning a broader economic cooperation aiming to promote mutual interests. We are not speaking about assistance or a country giving and the other taking. We are interested in cooperation in commerce, tourism, labor, and production. All this gives vitality to the Damascus Declaration and opens a broader prospect for political, security, and economic cooperation.

[Hafiz] Has the Yemen war affected, positively or negatively, Arab differences, the Damascus Declaration, and the trend toward reconciliation?

[Musa] Had it continued, the Yemen war would have had a tremendous effect on the entire Arab fabric. Fortunately, it did not, but it has undoubtedly left its mark, particularly in the Gulf region.

[Hafiz] Some charged the Egyptian position of being ambiguous toward the war in Yemen. What is your opinion?

[Musa] The vagueness has been in the Yemeni situation, in the problem itself. The situation became clear at a later stage with the decision of 'Ali Salim al-Bid in the south to secede and that of President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih in the north to fight.

Our position has been clear since the beginning. We rejected the secession. An Egyptian envoy went to Yemen, practically living there, and explained the Egyptian position clearly. We were against the war because we could not condone inter-Yemeni fighting.

Some may have been pleased with or angered with our position. But what mattered to us was our principles. We were against the war in Yemen. We were not ready to side with one part of Yemen against another. We did not want to denounce the Yemeni Socialist Party or any other party. We only opposed policies.

[Hafiz] A few hours ago, another violent crisis erupted between Morocco and Algeria, recalling earlier disputes between the two brotherly countries. What is Egypt's position on the new crisis, particularly that it has a history of dealing with this dispute?

[Musa] The crisis is unfortunate and deeply worrying. This is a fact. Another thing. What is going on there cannot be viewed in isolation from the wave of extremism in northern Africa, particularly in Algeria. We hope that the Algerian people will surmount this extremism. There is no need for other countries to suffer from the same threat.

[Hafiz] Is there any Egyptian initiative to stop this escalation between the two countries and ease the tension? President Mubarak, it is to be recalled, played a positive role in a previous crisis.

[Musa] The reasons for the current dispute are different from those of previous ones. The circumstances and motives are different. In all events, I will discuss the matter with the Algerian and Moroccan foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in the coming few days. We will try, as we always have, to defuse the crisis and end the escalation.

Musa Meets Clinton, Foreign Ministers at UN

NC2709073894 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa last night held a series of contacts with world foreign ministers on the sideline of the current session of the UN General Assembly to discuss the Middle East and current world issues. In this regard, Musa met with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjoern Tore Godal, and Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdulah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi.

Musa discussed with Hurd the latest developments in Bosnia and the two countries' views on how to settle the conflict there. With his Malaysian counterpart he discussed the position of the two countries and Islamic Conference Organization member states on the same issue. In his meeting with the Norwegian foreign minister, Musa reviewed developments in the Middle East peace process and preparations for the UN social conference to be held in Copenhagen next year.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa held talks last night with U.S. President Bill Clinton on developments in the Middle East peace process. The U.S. President asked Musa to convey a message to President Mubarak in reply to the latter's message, which Musa conveyed to President Clinton. The meeting followed a reception hosted by President Clinton in honor of the heads of states, governments, and delegations of African states taking part in the UN General Assembly.

Addressing the audience, President Clinton noted the success of the population conference held in Cairo and Egypt's success in organizing the most important conference held this century.

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Police Seize Arms, Suspects in Security Campaign

NC2409125094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1057 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Sep (MENA)—The Cairo General Intelligence Administration has launched a security campaign in various Cairo neighborhoods, particularly in densely populated areas and shantytowns, to arrest fugitive criminal elements and outlaws. The campaign, led by Major General Mahmud Wajdi, chief of the administration, has resulted in the seizure of six firearms of various types and the arrest of four political suspects.

Maj. Gen. Wajdi added that 128 fugitives wanted by the police for various offenses have been arrested and 25 fines have been issued. Security men have also seized two shotguns and 21 knives and assault objects. The campaign has also led to the arrest of 12 fugitive criminals and 122 fugitives who escaped prison sentences. Teams from the Cairo Counternarcotics Administration have uncovered 26 narcotics cases of various types.

Nile Shuttle Boat Trips to, From Sudan To Resume

NC2409173394 Paris AFP in English 1540 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] Aswan, Egypt, Sept 24 (AFP)—Nile shuttle boats are to resume their trips between Sudan and Egypt on Sunday [25 September], after Khartoum announced it would release an Egyptian boat held for more than a week, an Egyptian official said here Saturday.

Sudanese authorities would allow the "Sinai" to leave the Sudanese port of Wadi Halfa for Aswan in southern Egypt on Sunday, said Ahmad 'Ali Hasan, chairman of the Nile Valley Authority for Navigation.

Hasan announced Tuesday the suspension of passenger traffic between Sudan and Egypt until Sudan released the Sinai and its 40- strong crew held at Wadi Halfa since September 12.

Once the Sinai reached Aswan, Egyptian authorities would allow the release of the Sudanese ship "Saq al Na'im" held in retaliation and the resumption of Nile traffic, Hasan said.

The Sinai and the Saq al Na'im both belong to the Nile Valley Authority for Navigation, a joint Egyptian-Sudanese venture set up in 1975 to control passenger and goods traffic on the Nile.

Economists View IMF Row Over Reform, Devaluation

NC2509084794 Paris AFP in English 0000 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Report by Laurence Chabert]

[Text] Cairo, Sept 25 (AFP)—The Egyptian government and the International Monetary Fund are at odds over demands to speed up reform and devalue the Egyptian pound.

President Husni Mubarak said Friday: "The devaluation of the pound is not planned and is not being studied."

But the IMF insists that a too-strong pound will harm the country's exports, and believes that the currency is overvalued by 25-40 percent, according to the economic review AL-WAKALAH.

"The IMF believes that accrued inflation from the last three years and the lack of competitiveness of Egyptian exports justify devaluation," a Western economic expert said.

"Devaluation could be avoided if efforts were made to lower interest rates, boost exports, reform the financial system, speed up structural reform and keep to a strict wage policy," another economist said.

But restricting public salaries is a risky business in Egypt, already under the shadow of Islamic militant violence spurred on by economic and social inequality. Unemployment stands at 20 percent, according to US estimates.

Cairo and the IMF have been wrestling with a number of issues including devaluation in talks which began nine months ago and have not yet reached a conclusion.

Their negotiations on the 1994-95 financial year are to continue early October alongside meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in Madrid.

In the meantime the IMF refused to give the go-ahead to Club of Paris creditors' plans to wipe out four billion dollars of Egypt's debt in June.

The sum, amounting to 20 percent of Egypt's debt to its public creditors, was to be the last slice of a debt reduction promised after it signed an accord with the IMF in 1991.

But the IMF says Egypt has delayed an agreed programme of economic reforms.

Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi stressed this week that there was "no disagreement" between Egypt and the IMF and World Bank, while International Cooperation Minister Yusuf Butrus-Ghali said the IMF would give the green light to debt reduction before the end of the year, according to reports in the unofficial press.

Egypt is in a difficult situation. After large-scale devaluation three years ago, its currency has enjoyed unprecedented stability at 3.3 pounds a dollar.

The central bank has around 17 billion dollars in reserves, inflation has fallen to nine percent from more than 20 percent in 1991, and growth stands at around two percent.

But despite such encouraging signs, the economy has not taken off. The most recent available figures, for the 1992-93 financial year, showed a 5.3 billion dollar surplus in Egypt's balance of payments but the figure is misleading.

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"It represents the transfer of funds, not a trade surplus," an economist said.

Excluding such transfers and earnings sent back from 2.5 million Egyptians working abroad—attracted by high interest rates—Egypt's current accounts show an actual deficit of 3.8 billion dollars, according to a US embassy report in June.

The report cites "the drop in tourism revenue and non-oil exports, and a rise in imports."

Meanwhile the trade deficit rose by 14 percent to 7.3 billion dollars. "The absence of a significant rise in exports underlines the high rate of the pound ... and the low rate of activity in the private sector," the report said.

At lower than two billion dollars a year, non-oil exports "are ridiculously weak for a country of 60 million inhabitants," an economist said.

But Egyptian economists fear devaluation would only lead to soaring inflation again because many products are imported, and damage the confidence of investors without profiting on exports since cotton and oil, Egypt's principal exports, depend on world markets.

Lawyers Arrested for Contacting Fugitive 'Militant'

NC2609163894 Paris AFP in English 1512 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Cairo, Sept 26 (AFP)—State security authorities have arrested two Islamic lawyers accusing them of contacting a Muslim militant on the run who has been sentenced to death, a human rights group said Monday.

Ibrahim Nasr and Husayn Jabir are accused of speaking by telephone to Tharwat Salah Shihatah sentenced to death in his absence for his part in an assassination attempt on Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) said.

The two men arrested last week had taken over the work of defense lawyer Muntasir al-Zayyat detained by police since last May.

Al-Zayyat had defended radical blind Islamic cleric Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al Rahman, who is now awaiting trial in New York with 12 others on charges of organising a string of attacks.

Police last week also arrested three militants, among them two leading members of the outlawed al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) and a chief of the military wing of Jihad, according to the Egyptian press.

About 300 militants are believed to be detained as part of an investigation into the case dubbed "Collaborators of Tala'at Yasin Hammam," the former head of al-Jama'ah's military wing gunned down by police in April, the EOHR said.

Since then security services have launched successive campaigns to round up Hammam's followers, according to police sources.

A total of 120 members of the Brotherhood have also been detained including a deputy and a member of the group's politburo.

The majority are accused of belonging to an illegal organization, Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the Brotherhood's spokesman told AFP.

Police Find Body of Informer Said Killed by 'Militants'

NC2609165294 Paris AFP in English 1616 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Al-Minya, Egypt, Sept 26 (AFP)—The body of a farmer allegedly murdered by Muslim militants for acting as an informer was found in a field in the al-Minya region of Upper Egypt Monday, police said.

The body of Muhammad 'Afifi 'Abd-al Fattah, who was shot dead at point-blank range, was found in (Rayramon) near Mallawi, about 300 kilometres (180 miles) south of Cairo. He had been killed late Saturday.

His father and the village mayor blamed Muslim militants for the killing, police said.

A few days earlier 'Abd-al Fattah had told local officials and residents that a group of wanted militants was hiding in the village, they said.

The security services failed to find them in a search of the village.

A guard was killed in another village near Mallawi late Sunday, in an attack blamed on Muslim militants.

The militants have waged a violent campaign since March 1992 to topple the secularist government of President Husni Mubarak, in which more than 440 people have been killed.

Mauritania

Police Crack Down on Islamic Fundamentalists

AB2609173994 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 1215 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] In Mauritania, the police are continuing their raids against Islamic fundamentalist groups. The police have arrested several Islamic fundamentalist group members whom they accuse of plotting against President Maaouya Ould Taya's regime. Extensive surveillance measures have been put in place in Nouakchott, where five persons have already been arrested. From Nouakchott, Salem Mej Bour Salem reports.

[Begin Salem recording] Members of this ring are operating as part of a hitherto unknown organization called the Call to Islam. According to the interior minister, the

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members are collaborating with foreign powers. He further stated that the destabilization plans of the arrested persons include the massacre of civilians, violence against state officials, and undermining national sovereignty. The interior minister also said that automatic weapons, especially kalashnikovs, were seized from members of the organization who underwent training as recently as 19 September in the Nouakchott area. Furthermore, he said the Islamic fundamentalist ring which has been broken up received financial assistance from international organizations that support the Islamic religion in Mauritania.

Acts confirming latent Islamic fundamentalist operations were perpetrated in the country in October 1993 when French priests were attacked with machetes in the middle of a mass at a Nouakchott church. The person who carried out the attack was a violent fundamentalist. Another masked Islamic fundamentalist tried to shoot at government officials at point blank range during a ceremony at a former youth center in Nouakchott. He fired shots into the air, hitting a policeman. [end recording]

Sudan

Government Said To Confront Fundamentalists

MM2609140594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Sep 94 p 9

[Article by 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Rashid: "Fundamentalism in Sudan"]

[Text] The Sudanese Government yesterday settled the controversy about its position on the fundamentalist movements by choosing confrontation with them. It dared to execute 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Khalifi, whom it described as a religious extremist. It also jailed another person said to belong to the "Muslims' Group" [Jama'at al-Muslimin], a fundamentalist movement. So Sudan has joined Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, Oman, Palestine, and others.

However, the fact that Sudan has joined that group is very significant because it considers itself the foster mother of these movements. The significance of this incident lies in the fact that no government is immune any longer from such movements which believe in violence, no matter what concessions any government makes. The Sudanese Government was the example which the neofundamentalists used to cite although there was no practical or legal evidence of its Islamic fundamentalism. What pushed matters to the point of confrontation was the fact that the religious hardliners in Sudan were no longer satisfied with the government's promises and religious slogans. They blame it for its foreign relations with the West, which are continuing strongly. They condemned its welcome and praise for the pope, head of the Catholic Church. They were shocked when the government took a stand in support of the Christian government in Eritrea by closing the offices of the Eritrean Islamic movements on its territory and deported their employees. Then came the final straw so far as Sudan was concerned when it handed the terrorist Carlos to France at a time when France was hunting Algerian Islamists.

The opposition fundamentalist movement in Sudan is embarrassing the other fundamentalist movements in the Arab and Islamic worlds which used to portray Khartoum as their guide and the center. The Sudanese Government has become like the most other Arab governments, jailing mosque imams and replacing them with its own, jailing its religious opponents, hunting down those who distribute antigovernment leaflets, and banning fax machines. The day before yesterday it officially executed the first fundamentalist on its territory. A Sudanese close to the Khartoum government has told me that, on assuming power, the leadership tried to take advantage of the Islamic slogans which were undeniably popular in the region, but it discovered that that [fundamentalist] trend looked up to it and expected it to do things it could not do because of its circumstances, or maybe the government came to the conclusion that that trend was after political power, not religious reform, as it claimed.

In his view, the Sudanese Government is at the beginning of the road, and that trend is growing at its expense and even at the expense of the peaceful opposition, such as al-Sadiq al-Mahdi [Ummah Party leader], from whom the current regime usurped power. But how far will the confrontation go? He says that dozens of past incidents confirm that there is no minimum limit on which understanding can be reached and an acceptable solution found. He adds that the government has nothing to satisfy those people. The regime at the beginning strengthened the hardline trend in the hope of gaining political influence abroad and justifying its coup against the legitimate authorities, but it fell into the web of that trend and found itself in a position where it was called upon to keep the promises it had given it.

'Returnee' on Foreign Support for Garang Faction

EA2309172694 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Sep 94

[Text] First Lieutenant (John Bol Mayak), a returnee from the rebel movement-Garang's faction, who was in the movement for 11 years, has revealed that the Ugandan authorities provide them with military support and facilities to enable ease of movement in the field and the use of Ugandan territory for launching attacks on the Sudanese army and defenseless citizens. He said foreign states are continually extending support to the movement in various forms. It is arriving via foreign relief organizations operating in the south.

First Lieutenant (John Bol), a returnee from the rebel movement, said in a statement to the radio that the rebel, Garang, was sending his forces to kidnap children from their relatives and to recruit them forcibly into the ranks of the so-called (?Red) army. The returnee (John

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Bol), who was a member of the political committee of the rebel movement, explained that the rebel Garang now faces extensive criticism from the leaders of the movement, which lost strategic positions liberated after the successive victories of the armed forces and the people's defense.

He pointed out that there are many divisions within the ranks of the movement, that it no longer have an organized army and that the rebels are now in small, scattered groups that lack communications, food, and military supplies and are suffering from the spread of diseases. He said there are thousands on their way to surrender their arms and return to the fold of the homeland after the falsehood and allegations of the rebel movement, whose leaders are occupied with settling personal accounts, became clear to them.

Similarly, First Lieutenant (John Bol Mayak), a returnee from the rebel movement-Garang's faction, who was also a member of the committee for choosing delegations to negotiations with the government, added that the rebel Garang was the one who issued instructions to the negotiating delegation not to sign the resolutions of the first Abuja negotiations. However, members of the delegation ignored his orders.

He also tried to change the delegations chosen in the second Abuja negotiations and asked them to hamper the negotiations. He explained that the rebel Garang asked his delegation at the Nairobi discussions of the IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] initiative to present obstacles and crippling conditions, which had not been agreed upon, to guarantee that no agreement was reached on the southern problem.

He added, in his interview to the radio, that Garang does not want peace and that there are foreign states that dictate to him specific conditions for their continued support as long as he continues to foil efforts to establish peace.

He said the national salvation revolution had been characterized by a seriousness in submitting solutions to the southern problem. He accused the rebel movement of unjustified intransigence and pawning its will to foreign forces that do not want peace and stability for the country. He said the good reception given to returnees and the shelter provided for them, as well as the opportunities afforded to them for obtaining a decent living together with the political developments in the country concerning the pursuit of federal rule, all strengthened the desire of thousands from the scattered remnants of the rebellion to return to the fold of the homeland, having become convinced about the statements on peace and the government's serious programs for peace.

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Bahrain

Amir Receives Visiting Officials, Messages

Meets Russian Defense Official

JN2609104394 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpt] Manama, 26 Sep (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain, received here today Major General Nikolai Zlenko, acting director of the General Administration for International Military Cooperation at the Russian Defense Ministry [name and title as received], and the accompanying delegation, currently visiting Manama.

During the meeting, his highness noted the progress in the relations of cooperation and friendship between the two countries. The two sides also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of common interest.

The Russian official expressed happiness about the eagerness of the two friendly countries to promote cooperation in all fields. [passage omitted]

Receives Libyan Envoy, Summit Call

JN2609112494 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1030 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Manama, 26 Sep (WAKH)—Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah has received a written message from Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, containing a Libyan call for an Arab summit to achieve Arab reconciliation and unity of ranks.

'Abdallah Salim al-Badri, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for Energy, relayed the message today when his highness the amir and Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received him this morning.

During the meeting, they reviewed current Arab and international issues, bilateral ties, and issues of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Housing Minister Khalid Bin-'Abdallah Al Khalifah and Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of state for cabinet affairs.

Receives Bhutto Letter

JN2609131594 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1030 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpt] Manama, 26 Sep (WAKH)—Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received Pakistani Information and Broadcasting Minister Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal and his accompanying delegation here today.

During the meeting, the Pakistani minister handed the amir of Bahrain a letter from Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on bilateral ties and ways of promoting and enhancing mutual cooperation in the various fields.

The two sides also exchanged views on a number of Islamic and international issues of common concern. Their highnesses the amir and prime minister praised progress in bilateral media and cultural cooperation within the framework of the two countries' efforts to develop cooperation in the various domains. [passage omitted]

Minister Confers With Jordanian Counterpart

JN2609152594 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1255 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Manama, 26 Sep (WAKH)—Bahraini Minister of Communications Shaykh 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah met with Jordanian Minister of Communications Dr. Hashim al-Dabbas here today. They discussed issues of common interest, Bahrain's achievements in the telecommunications area, and postal relations.

Kuwait

Togolese President Leaves Following Talks

LD2609101394 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0950 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Kuwait, 26 Sep—General Gnassingbe Eyadema, president of the Republic of Togo, left Kuwait today after a two-day working visit during which he held talks with high-ranking Kuwaiti officials. Prior to leaving, General Eyadema earlier today met the amir of the State of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah.

Shaykh Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad, minister of amiri court affairs, said that the talks between the two sides concentrated on bilateral relations and the means to develop them in different spheres, and on the development of the situation at the African and international levels.

Oil Minister on Quota Violations, Stand on Prices

LD2609125794 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0944 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Kuwait, 26 Sep—In a press statement published here today, Kuwaiti Oil Minister 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Mid'aj said that there had been "relative violations" of the OPEC production quota, totalling 300,000 barrels per day.

However, he told AL-ANBA' that the violations, which were brought to light by the OPEC quota monitoring committee, were relatively small compared to previous violations by members of the Vienna-based OPEC.

About the OPEC production ceiling, Al-Mid'aj said that the State of Kuwait was in favor of fixing the ceiling,

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which is set at 24.52 million barrels per day, if world oil prices remained unchanged until the OPEC meeting in Bali, Indonesia in November.

About the environmental effects of oil, Al-Mid'ij said: it would be fair to discuss the pollution caused by other energy sources like gas and coal. He pointed out the significance of conflicting views on that issue, and stressed that dialogue remained as a productive and sound method and a healthy phenomenon which must continue.

Minister al-Mid'aj was remarking on the discussions and talks in which he had participated during the Third International Energy Conference in Cartagena, Spain on 19-20 September.

Saudi Arabia

Interior Ministry Statement on Arrests

LD2609212994 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpts] Riyadh, 26 September 1994, SPA—The Interior Ministry has issued the following important statement:

Praise be to God almighty and peace and prayers be upon the most honorable messenger; out of its wish to clarify matters regarding the increasing talk with regard to the arrest of some people who did not abide by what was decided by the Senior 'Ulema Council, and some others who had pledged to avoid causes of incitement and did not keep their pledge, and out of its wish to give reassurance to all the members of the nation, the Interior Ministry makes it clear that it arrested only those who have committed offenses repeatedly or committed a blatant offense and who have stuck to their position. The total number of those who have been arrested is 110, and the release of some of these will be looked into as soon as the current investigations with them are completed. Their release will be conditional on the presence of guarantors and the pledge by those to be released not to repeat an offense they carried out or participated in.

As for those who had a leading role in matters that violated the country's security, it will be decided to look into their case after the completion of the investigations being carried out with them currently so as to find out the reality of the plans they were making to create chaos and dissent. This is what they started to implement a few days ago, dragging with them people of the same orientation and deviant thinking. Others fell prey to their influence out of ignorance.

In order to protect society from their evil deeds, those who carried out actions with the aim of creating chaos have been arrested. At the forefront of these are:

Salman Bin Fahd al-'Awdah and Safar Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Hawali who carried out many acts violating what the Muslim committed to the group ought to be. This led the king to ask the Senior 'Ulema Council a year ago to examine the abuses of the aforementioned people whose actions do not accord with the obedience owed to the one charged with the authority to look after the affairs of all people, so long as he does not order offense against God, and this is in accordance with the Holy Koran, as God almighty said:

"O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the apostle, and those charged with authority among you." [passage omitted]

The Council of the Senior 'Ulema has studied the infringements of the said persons—which are among the gravest infringements by their like—and concluded that society was in need of protection from their mistakes if they did not refrain from their actions, and has unanimously issued its decision No. 2/951 dated 3.4.1414H. [September 1993]—a copy of which is attached herewith—whose text reads as follows:

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

No.: 2/951 Office of the Grand Mufti

Date: 3.4.1414H.

Secretariat General of the Senior 'Ulema

Attachments: 18—copy of letter

Confidential—From 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin 'Abdallah Bin Baz to His Royal Highness Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister—may God grant him success. God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you;

But to proceed; I refer to the letter of your highness No. M/B/4/192/MS dated 21-22/3/1414H containing the directive of the custodian of the two holy mosques [King Fahd]—may God protect him—submitting to the Council of Senior 'Ulema on its agenda at its 41st session convened in the city of Ta'if as from 18.3.1414H, the infringements of Safar Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Hawali and Salman Bin Fahd-al-'Awdah in some lectures and lessons.

I would like to inform your highness that the Council of Senior 'Ulema has perused your highness' letter referred to above and its attachment—a summary of the proceedings of the meetings held and lessons given by the said persons as from the first of the month of Muharram 1414H. [July 1993], and a copy from the book of Safar al- Hawali—Wa'ad Kissinger [as received]—and debated the issue from all its aspects; the council was acquainted also with some recordings made by the said persons.

After study and discussion of the matter, the council unanimously decided: To confront the said two persons with their mistakes, which were submitted to the council, and other mistakes to be submitted by the government, by way of a committee to be set up by the government and including two theologians to be selected by his excellency the minister of Islamic affairs, Waqf, call and

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guidance. If the said two persons apologized for the excesses and undertook not to resort to such practices then praise be to God and the matter would have rested there. But if they did not they would be banned from lectures, meetings, speeches, general studies, and the making of recordings in order to protect society from their mistakes—may God guide their steps and give them guidance. The council has asked me to inform your highness this opinion. I return herewith to your highness your letter and its attachments.

I pray to God to guide the custodian of the two holy mosques and your highness to what pleases him, and to help all in everything that is good. He listens to prayers and he is close to those why pray to him.

[Signed] The general mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and chairman of the Senior 'Ulema Council, and the administration of religious science research and ifta.

When the crown prince received the decision of the Senior 'Ulema Council he ordered that the decision be implemented. A committee was formed including two 'ulema selected by the minister of Islamic affairs, religious endowments, call, and guidance. The two ulema are: Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim Bin-Muhammad-al-Lahim and Dr. Ibrahim Bin-Muhammad Abu 'Abadah. The committee, which consists of four people—the two aforementioned ulema, Muhammad 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Duraybi, his excellency the undersecretary of the interior ministry, and General Salih Bin Taha Khusayfan, the director general of intelligence. They held a meeting on the night of 11 Rabi al-Thani 1414 AH. Safar Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Hawali and Sulayman Bin Fahd-al-'Audah were brought to the meeting and the decision of the senior 'ulema was read out to them, together with the abuses they have committed. Then they were asked to sign the already prepared pledge not to commit the offense again but they refused to sign and stuck to their position.

All that despite repeated attempts by the committee. They were then told that if they did not follow the contents of the letter of Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin 'Abdallah Bin Baz, his eminence the grand mufti of the kingdom, containing the decision of the Senior 'Ulema Council, they would be banned from attending lectures, meetings, speeches, general studies, and the making of recordings. They persisted with their attitude. They were informed that they had to halt all those activities forthwith, and that if they violated them then they would be punished, and that they had to refrain from any internal and external activities of this type. They then left the meeting.

The Interior Ministry was then informed that they had not refrained from such activities. A whole year then passed since the decision of the Senior 'Ulema Council. The Interior Ministry continued to order them to carry out what they had been told to do. When internal and external infringements increased, the said two persons were called before the council to pledge their commitment to what every Muslim is committed to, but they totally refused to do so. They began to openly hold meetings in which they delivered provocative speeches, exploiting some of the elements influenced by them and some youths whose knowledge and realization of the dangers of what they were doing were limited. The Interior Ministry became sure that they were also carrying out external [foreign] contacts with some suspect groups with which they were proceeding along this same path, and with others having the same hostile ideas that fight the faith of the forefathers and that aim toward dividing the people and spreading chaos out of their feeling of envy of the security, prosperity, and stability enjoyed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

They had found that there was no way for their perfidious and destructive objectives to succeed except that of the likes of those who have deviated from the right path, dissented with the consensus of the nation. They had not thought about God with regard to the consequences of their action to the country and people in terms of evil and sedition. For this reason, these rancorous deviants in their creed and action, are abroad engaged in releasing and publishing false statements and giving confusing interviews, having found a pretext in the arrest [in Saudi Arabia] of that group that shared their destructive activities. Their statements incited the sons of this country against one another with the aim of bringing about division and the realization of their perfidious objectives.

All this called for the urgent intervention of the security authorities to eliminate the signs and evil of sedition that began to openly manifest itself, and thus the aforementioned had been arrested because flexibility and indulgence did not work with them, and they had arrogantly continued their deeds. That was a measure required for the interests of the nation with a view to protecting society from the errors and evil of these people and their like. This intervention also accords with the requirement of the consensus of the Senior 'Ulema Council.

The Interior Ministry warns that it will not be lenient with anyone thinking of trifling with the country's destinies and will hit with all force those who want to violate its security, in order to protect the creed and the sanctities of Muslims and the interests of the nation. May God make permanent for our country the blessing of security and reassurance with regard to its religion and worldly existence, and restrain those who want to harm it and guide the Muslims who veer from the straight and narrow everywhere. May God protect for us the blessings we have as he is the best protector and the most merciful.

Repression Stories Dismissed as 'Media Campaign'

MM2609183594 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Sep 94 p 4

[Report by Sulayman Nimr: "After Prince Nayif's Affirmation That Kingdom Is Targeted, Who Is Behind the Campaign Against Saudi Arabia, and Have There Been Any Arrests?"]

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[Text] London—Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayif *Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz* stressed that "the Kingdom is targeted informationally by some foreign media services which have recently persisted in insulting the Kingdom." Prince Nayif also said in press statements to reporters the evening before last in Riyadh: "Actually we are not surprised by these media campaigns, whose source we know. We are targeted because of our religion and the security, stability, and prosperity that God has granted to us."

The Saudi interior minister's statements reflect sentiment in authoritative Saudi circles that there is a media campaign against the Kingdom, spreading reports of hundreds of arrests "among the ranks of Saudi oppositionists." These circles note that "the spread of these reports coincided with articles and analysis talking about internal and economic conditions in the Kingdom—articles by Western writers and journalists writing from abroad who are not familiar with Saudi affairs."

Although Prince Nayif did not specify the identity of the quarters behind the media campaign against the Kingdom, Arab diplomatic circles believe that the Israeli lobby in the United States and in the Western media services is behind the campaign. These circles believe that the aim of the campaign is to exert pressure on Saudi Arabia to prompt it to normalize its relations with Israel and to take pliable positions in the multilateral Middle East negotiations in which the Kingdom is taking part.

As we know, Riyadh continues to voice reservations about establishing any regional projects for joint cooperation with Israel until a full and comprehensive peace process is completed in accordance with the UN resolutions and the land for peace principle, and until an agreement is reached with Syria and Lebanon along the lines of the other agreements signed with the Palestinians and Jordan.

Diplomatic observers believe that the Saudi reservations—which have principled and religious reasons—about initiating cooperation steps with Israel angers the circles supporting Israel in the United States. Especially as these circles believe that the Kingdom supports the Syrian position in the peace process.

Despite the good strategic relations between Riyadh and Washington, pro-Israel circles in the U.S. Administration are dissatisfied with the Saudi position voicing reservations about normalizing relations with Israel, especially the lack of Saudi enthusiasm for lifting the Arab boycott of Israel. It is worth mentioning that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council states have announced that the resolutions concerning the Arab boycott of Israel fall under the Arab League's jurisdiction.

Political and Arab circles do not rule out that some of Israel's supporters in certain U.S. organs are behind the granting of political asylum to a Saudi dissident named Muhammad al-Khulaywi, who accused his country of helping Pakistan to acquire nuclear weapons and of spying on Jewish organizations in New York—matters which concern U.S. Jews if they are true. But to Arab and Islamic states they are patriotic positions for which Saudi Arabia should be thanked.

The well-informed circles believe that the reports released by some Western media services about "the arrest of hundreds of Saudi oppositionists" are untrue. And that what happened—what normally happens—is that some persons are summoned to explain some statements or some social and religious ideas they are promoting, then they are allowed to leave once they undertake in writing not to embark on promoting any statements or ideas that create confusion in society. As for the reports about threats made here and there against the stable security conditions in the kingdom and the threat to attack and kill foreign workers in the Kingdom, the Saudi authorities are paying no attention to them. Because they know that these quarters do not exist but are merely part of the media clamor. The political circles cite the statements made by the Saudi interior minister the day before yesterday, in which he stressed that the Kingdom enjoys full security and that every citizen and resident enjoys and will continue to enjoy security and peace.

Canadian Defense Minister Arrives in Jeddah

LD2709083494 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2141 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpts] Jeddah, 26 Sep (SPA)—Canadian National Defense Minister David Collenette and the delegation accompanying him arrived in Jeddah this evening on an official visit to the Kingdom. His excellency was welcomed on arrival by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general. [passage omitted]

His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz hosted a dinner for the Canadian defense minister and the delegation accompanying him this evening. [passage omitted]

Kazakh President Meets With Various Leaders

LD2609201094 Riyadh SPA in English 1912 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Jeddah, Sept 26, SPA—Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy premier, defence minister and inspector general, received today at his palace here Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev and the accompanying delegation.

The reception was attended by Muhammad Ibrahim Mas'ud, the state minister and member of the Council of Ministers and the minister of Hajj, Dr Mahmud Bin-Muhamad al-Safar.

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The party was also attended by the members of the delegation accompanying President Nazarbayev, including the foreign minster, the minister of reconstruction and housing and the minister of oil and gas.

Organization of Islamic Conference general secretary, Hamed al-Ghabed also met here today with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Nazarbayev reviewed with Ghabed the prospects of boosting cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Nazarbayev emphasized his country's determination on boosting its relations with OIC's member states.

For his part, Ghabed said the OIC will encourage its member states to develop their relations with the Central Asian Moslem country.

President Nazarbayev and the accompanying delegation also paid a visit here today to the headquarters of Jeddah's chamber of commerce and industry.

In an address, the chamber's chairman welcomed Nazarbayev and the accompanying delegation and wished the visit would result in establishing cooperation with Kazakhstan at the industrial and commercial levels.

For his part, Nazarbayev, expressed his happiness over visiting the kingdom and meeting with his brother the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Adb-al-Aziz Al Sa'ud.

Nazarbayev also invited Saudi businessmen to invest in his country, especially after issuing a number of laws that facilitate foreign investment in Kazakhstan.

Nazarbayev was accompanied on his visit to the chamber by the Minister of Hajj Mahmoud Mohammad Safar.

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Vietnamese Party Official Voices 'Solidarity'

JN2609120394 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1030 GMT 26 sep 94

[Text] (Do Van Thai), deputy head of the Foreign Relations Office of the Vietnamese Communist Party, has said the steadfastness of the Iraqi people in the face of the fiercest blockade ever is a source of pride for all anti-imperialist nations.

In a statement to an INA correspondent today, the Vietnamese official said the strength of Iraq and its unyielding people will overcome all the effects of the unfair blockade.

He stressed the Vietnamese people's solidarity with the Iraqi people, saying that the Vietnamese people are seeking, with all their power, to end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

He also expressed admiration of Iraq and its pioneering reconstruction campaign.

Received by Assembly Speaker

JN2709112094 Baghdad INA in English 0820 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Baghdad, Sep 27, INA—Speaker of the National Assembly, Sa'di Mahdi Salih has said the U.S. attempts to dictate its policies and dominance on the peoples and plunder their riches are a flagrant violation of human rights, and the matter requires a serious attitude by the Arab and world parties to stop these wicked attempts.

During a meeting yesterday with deputy chairman of the Foreign Relations committee at the Vietnamese Communist Party, Mr. Salih confirmed the U.S. insistence on keeping the blockade imposed on the people of Iraq is an odium in the forehead of the humanity.

The Vietnamese figure has highly appreciated the reconstruction drive carried out in the country to rebuild what has been destroyed by the aggressors in the 1991 war.

On the other hand, the speaker met secretary-general of the Naserrite Arab Party in Egypt, Farid 'Abd-al-Karim and the accompanying delegation.

Mr. Salih said the Iraqis had seriously worked for foiling all chapters of the conspiracy and were determined to break the unjust blockade designed to disrupt Iraq's progress and development.

For his part, the Egyptian politician extolled steadfastness of the Iraqis and their cohesion behind their wise command.

Barzani Forces Said Cooperating With Turkey

NC2409072794 Istanbul OZGUR ULKE in Turkish 19 Sep 94 p 8

[Report by Mudur Kaya and Recep Dasdelen; Kurdish place names as published]

[Text] Batuwa—Acting on the orders of the MIT [Turkish National Intelligence Organization], the Democratic Party of Kurdistan [DPK] has forcibly evicted residents from 24 villages in the Behdinan region and has given a deadline of one week for evictions from many other villages. The DPK's massing of troops in the border regions, in addition to the village evictions, is seen as preparation for an attack on the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan].

From 12 to 15 September, without giving any reason, DPK forces evicted people from Suline, Burya, Sudine, Nizore, Silane, Nisebanik, and Kesane in Dihok's Batuwa District; Nekankan, Kanimasi, Nerwehe, Bedehe, Ure, Hene, Serheno, Benavyan, Mae, Berbila, Sezee, and Hekwe in the Berwari District; and Istewan, Qesrok, Seranis, Dirmila, Mirbila, and Ewleh in the Derkar District.

After the village evictions, some 5,000 heavily-armed peshmergas were deployed in the region. Nearly 8,500 evicted villagers took shelter in the Derkar, Batuwa, and Berwari Districts and adjacent villages. The villages were evacuated by Adil Beg, the DPK commander in Berwari, and by DPK regimental commanders Abdulcelil Keko, Abdulkerim Serho, and Delo Korci, who are closely cooperating with the Turkish MIT. The villagers told us that the DPK is forcing people out of the villages on orders of the MIT.

The villagers indicated that Turkey is behind this development and that there are rumors of an impending operation. They said: "We were DPK supporters until two days ago. However, we no longer support the DPK because of the things done to us. The DPK wants to renew the fratricide. The blood of thousands of our brothers was shed in clashes with the YNK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] over the past four months. It is now being said that the DPK will join Turkey in operations against the PKK. This is why the DPK is forcing us out of our the villages against our will, on the pretext that we are suffering from operations launched by the Turkish Republic. They must realize that their forces will be decimated if they enter into a war with the PKK. We definitely do not want such fratricide."

In the meantime, it has been reported that many DPK peshmergas, who were to be transferred from Zakho and nearby regions to the border, have opposed police and refused to go to the border. These peshmergas said: "Adil Beg, Abdulkerim Ferho, and Delo Korci are men of the Turkish state. Being opposed to this, we are refusing to go to that region. We are against fratricide. The present massing of thousands of peshmergas on the border has been done under pressure from Turkey."

Local sources assess the village evictions and the DPK's massing on the borders as an indication of a war to be waged against the PKK and have expressed anxiety at the escalation of PKK-DPK tensions, which have been developing for some time.

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Saddam Rejects 'Double Standards'

JN2609203994 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] His Excellency President Saddam Husayn has said that one of the most important lessons of the Mother of Battles is that it demonstrated to the Arab nation, to the Iraqis in particular, their substance and their capacity for steadfastness, reconstruction, and jihad, as well as the depth of their history and their human and cultural message. The Mother of Battles, on the other hand, betrayed the double standards and spurious slogans and the imperialist and aggressive practices used by certain Western politicians applying standards sanctioned by a Western world that is morally and humanly bankrupt—a world of quacks, hypocrisy, spite, evil, and blood.

Take, for instance, the human rights cause pushed by some in the West. Who was it that trampled and continues to trample human rights under foot during the past six centuries? Who was it that colonized and looted the resources of extensive parts of the world and continues to force on them form of the new colonialism? Have these nations apologized for the old colonial era, or are they continuing to apply all kinds of pressure on their former colonies? Indeed, they are applying restrictions and pressure even on their allies. Why do these colonial powers not resort to dialogue and negotiation instead of pressure and threats if they really believe in human rights and sovereignty rights and democracy? Again, for instance, why has the British Government, which claims respect for democracy and human rights, been slaughtering the Irish in Ireland for over 20 years, and why has it reached the latest cease-fire agreement with them and allowed them to use British television to put their case to the British public only after thousands of victims have fallen and massive losses have been incurred?

Look at the U.S. Administration that—while saying it is not permissible for a big nation to conquer a small nation—carries out a big military landing to occupy such a small state as Haiti to force on the island a political system, as it did before in Panama, Guatemala, and Somalia. What kind of threat does a small state like Haiti pose to U.S. national security for the U.S. Administration to conquer that nation? Look at the American and Western media characterizing oppositionists in Egypt as terrorists, because the ruler of Egypt, President Husni Mubarak, is a friend of the Americans. Likewise, the Western media used to call the Palestinians and Algerians and all nationalists striving for their homelands terrorists.

His excellency the leader president made the remarks at the 21st session of the cabinet, which he chaired.

The leader president, meanwhile, asked the ministers to exhort their subordinates to draw inspiration and learn from our rich heritage in the areas of culture, justice, and human rights and the human applications and philosophy in irrigation, agriculture, literature, and arts and discuss these lessons at symposiums, conferences, and other forums in and outside of Iraq, particularly with some Westerners who claim that history began 200 years, when in actual fact history began here with the Arab nation. Human rights, for example, did not originate in America that [words indistinct] natives and used Africans for slaves and continues to practice racial discrimination against them. Human rights originated here in Iraq in the [words indistinct] and Hammurabi code and then was featured in the holy Koran and the message of Prophet Muhammad.

We must not confine ourselves to discussing our standards, but [words indistinct] history and a more profound and larger background [words indistinct] old and new human experiences.

The 21st session of the cabinet debated and approved a draft law on the maintenance of the irrigation systems aimed at securing and operating these networks in accordance with their designs and protecting agricultural [word indistinct] land from the bad effects of neglect and salinity and low fertility and identifying those responsible for that. Also discussed was the system of [words indistinct] in the establishments of the private, mixed, and cooperative sectors to encourage investment.

'Temporary' Changes Made to Ration Card Quotas

JN2509132994 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1225 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Baghdad, 25 Sep (INA)—The Ministry of Trade has emphasized that the changes introduced to the quotas and number of commodities covered by the ration card are temporary, and that they will be revoked once the circumstances of the unfair sanctions clamped on Iraq improve.

A source at the Ministry of Trade told the Iraqi News Agency that the continuation of the economic sanctions and their negative repercussions on the life of the Iraqi people require all of us to mobilize all efforts to rationalize consumption and streamline social life in a manner that is compatible with the economic situation experienced under the unfair sanctions.

The source pointed out that the state is subsidizing 99 percent of the cost of the commodities covered by the ration card, whereas citizens only pay one percent of these costs. The source indicated that the state will continue to provide these subsidies regardless of the difficult economic circumstances suffered by Iraq as a result of the continuation of the unfair embargo.

Ministry Orders Reduced Electrical Consumption

JN2609164694 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 24 Sep 94 p 4

[Report by Majid al-Lami]

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[Text] AL-JUMHURIYAH has learned that the Ministry of Industry and Minerals has made it mandatory for citizens and the owners of hotels, shops, and movie theaters not to use lamps with a power exceeding 60 watts, especially 1,000-watt spotlights and mercurial lamps with a power of 250, 160, and 125 watts, as well as 100-watt ordinary lamps. The Ministry urged citizens to use 40-watt fluorescent lamps and ordinary 60-watt lamps in observance of power saving instructions.

'Smaller Loaf, Greater Steadfastness' Urged

JN2609171294 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1050 GMT 26 Sep 94

["Text" of editorial titled "Smaller Loaf, Greater Steadfastness," published by AL-THAWRAH daily 26 September]

[Text] The great people of Iraq are keeping up their legendary steadfastness and valiant and resourceful resistance to the iniquitous sanctions imposed on them by their enemies and their stooges. Our people have shown their genuine belonging to their bright and creditable history and their abiding invocation of the tradition of their worthy ancestors, who bequeathed to them the homeland, civilization, and their historic role.

If the enemies who launched the 30-state aggression sought to destroy our advancement, they have, over the past four years, sought to destroy life through a sanctions regime that withholds food and medicine and all staples of life and science.

In standing up to this aggression, the Iraqis, led by their mujahid leader Saddam Husayn, keep up their valiant resistance to the sanctions, having written pages of heroism and glory in their bold confronation of the 30-state aggression and the page of treachery and treason.

The nearer the inevitable end of the sanctions draws, the harder the United States, which now stands virtually isolated in its aggression on the people of Iraq, tries to slam the door shut on the people of Iraq. Thus, the people and leadership of Iraq will have to devise new ways to confound enemy calculations as the countdown for the end of the sanctions begins. It is against the background of the iniquitous sanctions that we must look at the instructions of the Council of Ministers to streamline the economy so as to bolster our steadfastness.

These measures amount to tapping new reserves of the mujahid Iraqi men and women. This is no less important than mustering our reserves under circumstances that threaten the sovereignty and security of the homeland. In adopting these measures, the Cabinet is not acting from a vacuum. These measures were based on a responsible and detailed knowledge of the conditions, patience and sacrifices of the people throughout the years of the unfinished Mother of Battles. They are also in keeping with the thinking of the leadership which, thanks to long experience, ordinary Iraqis have come to know well. Ordinary Iraqis are also aware of the leadership's concern for their national and food security.

Such a responsible attitude on the part of the Iraqi leadership has no parallel in any beleaguered regional power.

Sovereignty and honor count for far more than an extra loaf of bread. The homeland, which the Iraqis have not begrudged their blood, is surely worth sacrificing something as little as a loaf of bread. The Iraqis, who, battling against the fiercest enemies in a most frocious and protracted war, have proved their selflessness, surely have it in them to spring more surprises on the world in the way of increased austerity and greater patience and determination. This is because, mindful of their sacrifices, the Iraqis are rendered more determined as they defend the undoubted victory that they have made with their will power, martyrs, reconstruction effort, and resourcefulness. Victory will not elude Iraq. Iraq will not relinquish its honor for a handful of flour. The Iraqis take pride in their sacrifices, the stuff of which their glory is made. These sacrifices will open for them the doors of a bright, glorious, bountiful, and decent future. Never will Iraq's fund of resilience dry up.

These measures are all the more relevant in that they take account of the present conditions brought on by the ongoing sanctions. However, it is a provisional step that promises to reinstate the quotas as soon as conditions improve, and improve they will.

Bank Withdraws 50-Dinar Note From Circulation

JN2509171794 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 16 Sep 94 p 4

[Text] The Iraqi Central Bank has issued a statement on its decision to withdraw from circulation during the 17 September-16 October 1994 period the first issue of the 50-dinar banknote issued under Republican Decree No. 78 of 1991, which carries the letter series "Kha Dal" and is predominantly orange in color.

The statement explained that this currency note will be considered illegal as of 17 October 1994. The Iraqi Central Bank and its branches in al-Basrah and Mosul will exchange this currency note with currency notes of other denominations until the end of a five-year period beginning at the date of the publication of this statement in the Official Gazette.

The statement says the withdrawal of this currency note will have no effect whatsoever on the legality of the second issue of the 50- dinar banknote, which was issued under Republican Decree No. 54 of 1994 and which also carries the letter series "Kha Dal" and is predominantly brown in color, and which circulates as legal tender.

Political Parties Law Amended

JN2609193394 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 22 Sep 94 p 2

["Text" of Law No. 15 of 1994, amending Political Parties Law No. 30 of 1991, issued by RCC on 17 September]

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[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

In the name of the people

Revolution Command Council [RCC]

Decision No. 160, dated 12 Rabi' al-Thani, 1415 Hegira, corresponding to 17 September, 1994:

Based on the provisions of Paragraph A of Article 42 of the Constitution, the RCC has decided to issue the following decision No. 15 for the year of 1994:

The first law amending Political Parties Law No. 30 of the year 1991:

Article 1:

Paragraphs first and second of Article No. 71 of Political Parties Law No. 30 of the year 1991 shall be canceled and replaced by the following:

First: The application to form a party, signed by no fewer than 150 founding members, shall be submitted to the interior minister.

Second: The founding member must be of Iraqi citizenship, his parents must be Iraqi-born, he should not be under 25 years of age, and he must not have been convicted of committing a premeditated murder or an immoral crime.

Article 2:

This law shall be published in the official gazette.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, chairman of the Revolution Command Council

IAEA Resolutions, Israel Criticized

JN2509144594 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0657 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Baghdad, 25 Sep (INA)—An Iraqi writer and political analyst has said that the United Nations is encouraging countries and organizations to support the Zionist military nuclear program and aggravate its dangers and threats to regional and world peace and security.

In an article published here today, Salah al-Mukhtar, chief editor of the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH, comments on two inharmonious resolutions passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]. One of these two resolutions repealed the sanctions resolution passed against the Zionist entity in 1981 in the aftermath of the air strike it launched against the Iraqi Tammuz nuclear reactor, which was used for peaceful purposes; while the other resolution promoted anti-Iraq lies. The writer says that the IAEA's position, which is flawed in both substance and form, betrays the United Nations' subservience to the U.S. policy.

The writer goes on to say: The IAEA has been swayed by the U.S. policy, which aims to promote the Zionist superiority over the Arabs in all areas, particularly in the nuclear field; and this requires the complete neutralization of the Arab nuclear expertise.

Salah al-Mukhtar says: The IAEA and its mother organization, the United Nations, lost their credibility when they condoned the Zionist entity's refusal to join the IAEA and allow inspections of its nuclear installations although several U.S. quarters have repeatedly said that it is in possession of some 200 nuclear warheads.

Recounting the inspection teams that have visited Iraq, al-Mukhtar says that 26 nuclear inspection teams comprising 533 inspectors of 35 nationalities affiliated with the IAEA have visited Iraq. They spent 241 days in Iraq, during which time they carried out 634 visits, including, at least, 61 surprise visits to sites that have nothing to do with the Iraqi nuclear program.

Al-Mukhtar adds: The reports submitted by these teams have been unanimous in saying: "We have not found anything." The IAEA president summed up the inspectors' findings, saying: "Iraq is now free of nuclear materiel."

Al-Mukhtar goes on to say: The irony here is that the IAEA has chosen to dispute the statements issued by its president and inspection teams. The IAEA's brazen and flagrant employment of double standards has been demonstrated by its commendation of an entity that does not obey the IAEA's regulations and rules, an entity that has refused to join it, and also by the call it has made urging the international community to perpetuate the sanctions clamped on Iraq on the pretext of its alleged failure to implement UN resolutions, whose implementation has been attested to by UN bodies. Moreover, Iraq is an IAEA member that is committed to the IAEA's regulations and laws. The United Nations' fig leaf has fallen. At present, the United Nations is no longer ashamed of appearing as a small section of the U.S. State Department. The double standards pursued by the United Nations is the outcome of its subservience to the U.S. policy, which is based on the pursuit of double standards.

In his analysis, Salah al-Mukhtar says: The recent resolutions issued by the IAEA are in line with the current U.S. world nuclear policy. The United States is obsessed with the task of containing nuclear countries in the world at any price.

The writer says that this U.S. policy is prompted by the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons and materiel by countries would force the United States to deal with them as equals, because these states would use their nuclear capabilities should the big powers threaten them with the use of mass destruction weapons.

The writer adds that the United States does not want the return of the so-called "mutual nuclear deterrence", because this would deny it the privilege of nuclear blackmail.

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Al-Mukhtar goes on to say: The U.S. impudence has reached the limit of disregarding the reactions of all world states, as well as the sentiments and dignity of the countries whose nuclear disarmament is sought by U.S. officials. This disarmament is meant to be achieved through financial temptations and threats. Meanwhile, by repealing the Israel sanctions, the United States is encouraging the Zionist entity to nurture and support its military nuclear program.

The writer notes the Saudi regime's stand at the IAEA meetings, which publicly supported the revocation of the sanctions clamped on the Zionist nuclear program and the perpetuation of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, saying: This is the conduct of a regime that has been stripped of honor and humanity, and that has pronounced total subservience not only to the United States, but also to the Zionist entity.

Writer Proposes TV, Radio, INA Reorganization

JN2309161594 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 19 Sep 94 p 2

[Article by Mazhar 'Arif: "An Opinion About the Media"]

[Excerpts] Numerous ideas, proposals, and opinions about culture and media have been reported in our press for many years. All this, however, has led to almost nothing, as if no one reads, listens to, or wishes to benefit from these proposals. However, the truth was totally different because there were people who really read these articles. Their reaction was covert dissatisfaction with the person raising these ideas and opinions. Editors and writers recall the reproaching and scolding of chief editors for ideas, opinions, and criticisms written in their publications about all we and the citizens see as being unfit for cultural and media work. We should have left these unfit things behind a long time ago, so matters could be as sound as they are in many countries. [passage omitted]

What I want to raise as an idea, not as an opinion, is that the General Corporation of Radio and Television should be turned into a committee, and that the Iraqi News Agency [INA] should become a semi-official corporation. I suggest that such a committee, consisting of specialists, should be linked to the Presidential Office and not to the Ministry of Information which, as I once pointed out, has no counterpart ministries bearing the same name in the world. Such a committee should have of long-term planning powers, not the primitive planning power to set radio and television program cycles on an annual basis, as the case has been so far. When such a committee has this level of links and powers, its head, who is also the corporation's head, will have free work opportunities, unburdened with any instructions to do this or not to do that.

Turning INA into a semi-official corporation will remove the barriers facing both the news and press reports. It will also give more freedom of work to correspondents and editors, turning them into real innovators in their specialty and freeing them from the mail man who conveys letters as he pleases.

One reason for the deterioration of our journalism is the absence of exclusive newspaper reporting, the transformation of papers into followers of the official news agency, and the fact that officials prefer to grant important reports to INA rather than to the papers, so a report will appear in all papers rather than in one paper.

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Peres Denies Contacts Setting Up al-Shar' Talks

TA2609165594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres conferred in New York today with his Norwegian and Dutch counterparts as well as with the Mexican president. The Norwegian foreign minister told him that the UN secretary general had agreed that the funds for the Palestinian police would temporarily be delivered via UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Agency].

Answering a question by our correspondent, Minister Peres said there had been no contacts with the Syrian delegation in a bid to arrange a meeting with his counterpart Faruq al-Shar'.

Peres: 'Arafat's Critics Lack Alternatives

NC2609150694 Paris AFP in English 1422 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Cairo, Sept 26 (AFP)—Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres on Monday accused critics of PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat of failing to offer any viable alternatives to the Palestinian people.

"Those who criticise should ask themselves: What did they achieve? They kept the Palestinian tragedy intact for so many years," Peres told the English-language weekly MIDDLE EAST TIMES, published in Cairo.

"They refused to have a state when they could have it. They created the refugee problem, which was totally unnecessary. What is their claim to glory? Their only claim is to gloom, not glory," he said.

Palestinian hardliners have accused 'Arafat of adopting an authoritarian attitude and surrendering to Israeli demands.

Several hardline groups, including the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), are opposed to the PLO-Israeli Declaration of Principles signed in Washington last September and the May 4 accord which launched limited Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Peres, a key architect of the autonomy deal, expressed support for 'Arafat's measures to curb anti-Israeli violence.

"I am satisfied with the growing understanding of 'Arafat to improve his response. They are trying to endanger his rule more than ours," Peres said, referring to recent arrests of Palestinian extremists.

'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin clinched an agreement Sunday to launch talks on the second stage of autonomy in a week's time, during a meeting at the Erez checkpoint into the Gaza Strip.

The negotiations would include Palestinian elections, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from built-up Palestinian areas, border crossings, security issues and the spread of autonomy beyond Gaza and Jericho across the West Bank.

Referring to the Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process, Peres criticised Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's refusal to meet Rabin.

"Our part is open and their part is resisting ... [ellipsis as received] I don't understand why, when we negotiate peace, we have to remain shy. Why?

"We are not negotiating something that is unfair or clandestine. It would be more than normal to meet and talk. The Syrian side doesn't want to have this sort of relationship," he said.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks are stalled over the conditions for an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, seized in the 1967 Arab- Israeli war.

Peres said a plan for a "marginal withdrawal" from the strategic heights put forward by Rabin would not affect settlements where 12,000 Israelis live.

"We will try to carve the territory in such a way that won't harm the settlements."

Extreme right-wing leader Binyamin Kahane warned Monday in Jerusalem that some Jewish settlements in the territories would declare independence if Israel tried to evacuate them.

Beilin: No Treaty With Jordan 'for Several Months'

TA2609120194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Peace talks between Israel and Jordan due to resume at Jordan's Dead Sea Spa Hotel this week have been postponed to next month. The delay was requested by Jordan which explained that its delegation head, Fayiz al-Tarawinah, who is also ambassador to the United States is in Washington. Al-Tarawinah is holding talks with Israeli and American officials to prepare for a three-way meeting at the White House next week between U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan. Reports from Washington say the three men might announce the date for the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, but here in Jerusalem, Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin says the treaty cannot be expected for several months because the two sides need more time to work out issues related to border demarcation and sharing water sources. Beilin welcomed the idea of a meeting in Washington, but said it would not produce a breakthrough.

[Begin recording] [Beilin] Well, I think that every such meeting is promoting the peace process and the ability of the leaders of the region to sit together. To talk under the auspices of the American President is the best opportunity to deal with some of the hurdles on the way, but I don't believe that we are expecting a breakthrough in this meeting. We still have some problems on the issues of the border and the water between the Jordanians and

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ourselves, and we will need, I presume, some months before these problems are being solved.

[Harley Braidman] So when can we expect the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan?

[Beilin] Again, I believe that we are speaking here about several months. It is impossible for us to refer to a certain date. If there are no surprises, and if Jordan is ready to sign an agreement with us, that won't need more than several months. [end recording]

Rabin Lifts Building Freeze on West Bank Settlement

TA2609143394 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Sep 94 p A1

[Report by Amnon Barzilay]

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin decided to lift the building freeze in Alfey Menashe, a settlement located east of the Green Line. In the wake of Rabin's decision, Construction and Housing Ministry Director General Arye Mizrahi sent a letter in early August to Yehuda Hame'iri, the ministry's director of the central district, informing him of the resumption of plans to build 844 housing units in Giv'at Tal, within Alfey Menashe's boundaries. Mizrahi further informed him of the decision to lift the building freeze on 150 housing units in the center of Alfey Menashe, in a neighborhood called Tzavta Bet. A copy of the letter was sent to Shlomo Qatan, head of the Alfey Menashe local council.

Construction and Housing Ministry officials met with Qatan for the first time after the decision to discuss the legal aspects of resuming construction in the settlement. Qatan told HA'ARETZ that construction could resume within six months and that he believes Alfey Menashe will double its population within two to three years as a result of the decision.

Government sources noted over the weekend that the Construction and Housing Ministry has compiled another list of settlements where the construction freeze will be lifted. According to these sources, the decision to resume construction in those settlements came in the context of the government's "boundary policy" designed to prevent migration back to the Green Line from several troublesome areas, mainly around Jerusalem and Qalqilyah.

[An article by the same author on page B3 of the same paper adds that "private construction continues unhindered in Oranit, a settlement in the no-man's-land abutting the border. About two months ago, the Education Ministry approved an allocation of 5 million shekels to build the first stage of a regional junior high school on the site." The report further notes that a committee headed by Noah Kinarti, Rabin's adviser on settlement affairs, "approved the construction of 270 housing units in Oranit's Tzamarot neighborhood."]

Arab MK Meets 'Senior Iraqi Personage' in Jordan

TA2609125794 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Knesset Member [MK] Talib al-Sani' said that in Jordan yesterday he met with a senior Iraqi personage who promised to make every effort to obtain approval for a visit to Iraq by a delegation composed of Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews of Iraqi descent, which MK's Darawshah and al-Sani' are trying to organize. The senior Iraqi personage promised an answer within 10 days. MK al-Sani' who returned from Jordan to Israel this morning notes that the talk with the man was friendly.

[Begin al-Sani' recording] In Amman yesterday I met with an Iraqi personality who is close to the Iraqi regime and we talked about the overall Middle East situation and the regional peace process, as well as the idea of delegation initiated by my colleague MK Darawshah. During my visit to Jordan I tried to promote this important visit to iraq as a token of solidarity with the Iraqi people who suffer badly due to the blockade and sanctions imposed by the United States. The talk was held in a very friendly atmosphere. The Iraqi personality accepted our position and the idea and initiative of the visit. He promised to give me an answer within seven to 10 days. [end recording]

Discusses Visit to Jordan

JN2609192594 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Interview with attorney Talab al-Sani', ADP Knesset member, by correspondent Jawad Abu-Shaykhah; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Abu-Shaykhah] Knesset member from the ADP [Arab Democratic Party] Talab al-Sani', good evening.

[Al-Sani'] Good evening.

[Abu-Shaykhah] What took place during your visit to Jordan, which ended today. What was the objective of this 10-day visit?

[Al-Sani'] The visit was a private one. During the visit, I met with his Majesty King Husayn, several ministers in the Jordanian Government—Interior Minister Salamah Hammad, Education Minister 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, and Culture Minister Jum'ah Hammad. I also met with House of Representatives Speaker Mr. Tahir al-Masri and the directorate of Palestinian affairs in Jordan. We discussed several issues of interest to the Arab masses in Israel, particularly facilitating visits to Jordan. In this respect, it was agreed to show great flexibility on the issue of facilitating visits. Any person having relatives in Jordan can submit an application for a visit to the Jordanian Interior Ministry. The latter will try as best as it can to approve these requests. We also

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discussed the possibility of opening the doors of Jordanian universities to Arab students from Israel, and the issue of Muslim shrines in Israel which are being harmed, such as al-Hamra Mosque in Zefat, the Islamic cemetery in Haifa, the Salamah cemetery in Yafo, and the Islamic Mosque in Beersheba, which was transformed into a museum. I asked the Jordanian Government, as well as King Husayn, to call on the Israeli Government to desist from harming Muslim feelings and to return these Muslim landmarks, and stop desecrating and harming them. I also discussed the possibility of helping our kinsfolk in the Negev to obtain documents and aerial photos from the British Government concerning the ownership and use of the Arab lands. Most of the time, Israel claims that the lands were not used. I am confident, and all evidence says, that there are aerial photos taken during the British mandate proving the Negev lands were being used. This will help us in cases before the courts concerning the lands in Beersheba. In this respect, agreement was reached to continue contacts to support us in this field.

[Zaki] Mr. Talab, you mentioned in your statements that you had discussed the issue of harming Muslim places within the Green Line with the Jordanian officials. Have you previously discussed this with the Palestinian side, specifically with the PLO?

[Al-Sani'] Yes, I have discussed this issue with the Palestinian National Authority. We constantly hold contacts in this respect. The purpose is to mobilize public opinion and the governments in the Islamic countries to try to stop the damage being done to Muslim shrines within the Green Line. Following the application of the absentees properties law on the Islamic Awqaf properties, there were many attempts to harm the Islamic shrines, and to confiscate Islamic cemeteries, as was the case with the Salamah cemetery in Yafo a few months ago.

[Zaki] Mr. Talab, a last question. Have you met any Palestinian leader during your visit to Jordan?

[Al-Sani'] Yes, I met with many Palestinian leaders. I was warmly welcomed by them. I visited the Palestine National Council [PNC]. I met with brother Salim al-Za'nun, Abu-al-Adib, and with 15 PNC members. I also met with brother Hani al-Hasan, 'Abbas Zaki, and Taysir Khalid. The discussion dealt with the political developments on the Palestinian track. They also asked questions about the state of affairs of the Palestinian masses in Israel, and the political and party state of affairs with respect to the Arab masses in Israel.

[Zaki] Mr. Talab al-Sani' Knesset member from the ADP, thank you very much.

Likud's Netanyahu Reportedly Seeks Mubarak Meeting

TA2409164794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] Sources in the Prime Minister's Office say they knew all about Binyamin Netanyahu's meeting in London last week with Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan. Qol Yisra'el's Knesset reporter says that, despite the fact that the meeting was kept secret and the Prime Minister's Office was only informed about it a few hours before it took place, they were informed about it days before, by the Jordanians. Our reporter adds that in the meeting the Likud leader did not invite any representative of the Israeli Embassy in Britain to participate, and afterward Netanyahu neither reported to the Foreign Ministry, nor to the Prime Minister's Office about his talks with Prince Hasan. Sources in the Prime Minister's Office say this runs counter to what is expectable in similar such meetings. Sources in the Likud say Netanyahu is now trying to set up a meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak.

Likud: Shahal's Police Proposal 'Not Realistic'

TA2609141894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] The opposition Likud says the proposal by Police Minister Moshe Shahal to replace Israeli soldiers with policemen in Judaea and Samaria shows that the Israeli-PLO agreement is not realistic. Likud Knesset Member Beni Begin says it is clear that the PLO will reject this proposal, which leaves the government a choice to abandon Jewish settlers or the peace deal with the PLO.

North Korea Said Seeking To Establish Relations

TA2609143194 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Sep 94 p A1

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[Excerpt] Kim Chong-il, North Korea's president-designate, wants to establish relations with Israel. Kim told a European dignitary he met in Pyongyang that North Korea has close relations with all the Arab and Muslim countries, particularly Iran and Syria, and is seeking to conduct a more balanced foreign policy and to maintain relations with Israel at the same time.

A report sent to Jerusalem about the meeting notes that Kim said he had no complaints against Israel and its policy. He nevertheless added that the establishment of relations was impossible because the Americans are not allowing Israel to make such a move.

Political sources estimate that Kim was seeking to relay a message to Israel, seeing that the European dignitary is well known for his good ties with Israel. Jerusalem received the report about the meeting from an Israeli embassy in Europe. [passage omitted]

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Government Denies Israeli Report on Draft Accord

JN2709091794 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 27 Sep 94, pp 1, 7

[Article by JORDAN TIMES staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—Jordan on Monday [26 September] dismissed as untrue Israeli reports that the Kingdom and the Jewish state were drawing up a draft peace agreement.

Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, spokesman for the Jordanian delegation to peace talks with Israel, reaffirmed that a peace treaty with Israel could come only after border and water disputes were satisfactorily resolved.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir was commenting on Israeli reports that Jordanian and Israeli officials were putting the "finishing touches" to an agreement.

"It is untrue," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said in the reports. "A peace agreement depends on resolution to all outstanding issues," including territorial claims and demands for a fair share of the region's waters, he told the JORDAN TIMES.

"We have not reached that point. Therefore there is no question of a peace agreement at this point in time, draft or otherwise," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said.

The spokesman also said a round of Israeli-Jordanian negotiations scheduled for this week was likely to be canceled. If all the talks were held, he said, they would be "low key," at experts' level.

The reason for the cancellation was the absence of most of the negotiators. Jordanian chief negotiators Fayiz al-Tarawinah, who is also the Kingdom's ambassador to the U.S., is in Washington ahead of a visit there by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan.

Israel's chief delegate, Elayqim Rubinstein, a senior Foreign Ministry official, is also in Washington along with several of his fellow negotiators.

Israeli Foreign Ministry officials were meanwhile quoted as saying by REUTERS that U.S. President Bill Clinton would host Crown Prince Hasan and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at the White House next week. No date has been set for the meeting yet, the unidentified officials were quoted as saying.

Earlier, Jordanian sources said the crown prince, who is scheduled to address the U.N. General Assembly next week, would meet with Mr. Peres in a meeting also attended by U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

A Jordanian source close to the peace negotiations said: "There are discussions going on to arrange a top-level meeting; it is not clear yet whether President Clinton or Vice President Gore would host the meeting, or whether it would be at the U.N. in New York or in Washington."

According to the Israeli newspapers MA'ARIV and HA'ARETZ and military radio, a date of signing the purported Jordanian-Israeli peace accord would be announced at the White House meeting of President Clinton, Crown Prince Hasan and Mr. Peres.

The Jordanian sources denied the report. "I don't think that is possible or realistic, given that Jordan and Israel are a long way from a peace agreement," said the source without elaboration.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin also dampened the speculation, telling Israeli radio and television that the meeting "will not result in any breakthrough."

"Certainly some progress is being made in the negotiations, but we won't see real progress in several months," Mr. Beilin said.

That appeared to be more in line with an Israeli army radio report quoting Information Minister Jawad al-'Anani as saying that progress has been made lately in Jordanian-Israeli bilateral negotiations and that the delegations were making arrangements for demarcating the border and sharing water.

Jordan has firmly stated that there could be a peace accord without addressing the Kingdom's territorial claims and its demand for its rightful share of water in the north. [sentence as published]

Jordanian negotiators have said that they found their Israeli counterparts dragging their feet in the initial rounds of negotiations launched after the signing of the Washington Declaration on July 25.

Analysts said the Israeli claims that a draft peace accord with Jordan was in the making could be a bid to encourage Damascus to accept a meeting between Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Mr. Peres at the U.N.

"Israeli reports and claims have always to be taken with a pinch of salt, particularly when it comes to the peace process these days," according to an analyst. "One has always to look critically at those reports and try to fathom the motivations behind them"

Efforts to arrange an al-Shar'-Peres meeting made headway during a visit to the Middle East of Washington's regional troubleshooter Dennis Ross last week, but the precise status of those efforts was not known.

In his comments to the JORDAN TIMES on Monday, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir also denied reports that Jordanian and Israeli negotiators would meet at the Mediterranean town of Herzliyya for the next round of talks in October.

"The precise venue for the talks has not been finalised, but I can tell you this: It won't be anywhere in an Israeli population centre," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said.

The talks are scheduled to begin on Oct. 10 and would last for two weeks alternating between Jordanian and

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Israeli venues. The Jordanian venue is expected to be the Dead Sea Spa Hotel, which has already hosted several rounds of negotiations.

'Secret' Security Deal Said Signed With Israel

NC2709082594 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 23 Sep 94 p 14

[Report by Badra Bakhus al-Faghali in Paris]

[Text] High-ranking diplomatic sources have revealed that Jordan and Israel signed a "secret" security agreement to combat the growth of religious fundamentalism. The two countries believe that cooperation in this area serves their existence.

The security agreement is part of the open relations the two countries established after the Washington Declaration. The sources say that the fundamentalist "Muslim Brotherhood," which operates publicly in Jordan, is the "big brother" of Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement], which is active in the West Bank and the Palestinian self-rule areas, and of the Muslim Brotherhood movement inside Israel itself. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has a military arm with underground cells prepared to carry out terrorist operations.

Two Jordanian parliamentarians were arrested for their link to the military arm of the Muslim Brotherhood; they planned attacks against some figures in the country.

The Western sources believe that the Washington Declaration and the emerging peace between Jordan and Israel have stirred up the fundamentalist movements in Jordan; hence Jordan's prompt consent to the security agreement with Israel. Jordanian security circles fear these movements will try to carry out acts of direct personal terrorism that may hurt or liquidate members of the Jordanian royal family.

EU Initiative 'To Be Announced Soon'

JN2409104994 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 24 Sep 94, p 1

[Article By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter 'Ayman al-Safadi]

[Text] Amman—European nations are discussing a programme of economic and political support for Jordan and diplomatic sources said the initiative could be announced in the "very near future."

The sources told the JORDAN TIMES that in addition to helping the Kingdom and encouraging its role in the peace process, the Europeans are taking the initiative to reassert their role in the region after it was "marginalised" by their absence from the bilateral talks between the Arabs and Israel.

The sources said the Europeans feel uncomfortable with the growing American economic and political presence in the area at the expense of Europe, which has traditionally had strong political and economic ties with the countries of the region.

After the Gulf war, the Europeans felt uncomfortable when the United States consolidated its economic and political presence in the Gulf "at the expense of European interests," sources said. This feeling is "being repeated now with the U.S. increasing its presence in the Middle East through its involvement in the bilateral talks of the peace process as the Europeans" are kept at bay, Western diplomatic sources said.

The sources said Jordan is aware of the Europeans' unhappiness with the marginalisation of their role in the area to the advantage of the Americans.

European countries have been kept out of the bilateral peace talks between the Arabs and Israel but are involved in the multilateral phase of the negotiations.

The sources say, however, that the multilateral talks are being seen as "academic debates" that are producing no results, unlike the bilateral negotiations which are registering tangible progress and thus preparing the ground for us to "take the biggest share of the economic pie" in the area in terms of winning the contracts and business deals that will be offered in the future.

Sources said the European nations will soon be pushing towards having the multilateral achieve tangible results in terms of solid projects that can be implemented. Through improving the image of the multilaterals and producing solid results out of them, the sources said, European countries hope to regain their presence in the area economically and politically.

The Gulf market witnessed difficult competition between European countries and the U.S., in the aftermath of the Gulf war, with some European nations attributing the success of the U.S. in getting a bigger share of the market to political considerations that weighed in favour of Washington due to its larger involvement in the Gulf war.

APU President Meets Parliament Officials

JN2609175394 Amman Radio Jordan Network in English 1700 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Tahir al-Masri has met with Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of Sudan's Transitional National Assembly, the president of the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU]. They discussed ways of supporting the union. Mr. Khalifah underlined the need for modernizing the union's General Secretariat financially and administratively and called for a prompt meeting of the union's council as soon as possible.

On his part, Mr. al-Masri expressed that the Lower House in Jordan is ready to play any role that serves the causes of the Arab nation.

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Earlier today, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad al-Lawzi received the visiting president of the APU. Discussions dealt with means to promote the union's function to achieve pan-Arab solidarity.

Al-'Anani on $220-Million Debt Write-Off

JN2509094294 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 25 Sep 94 p 3

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—The Council of Ministers Saturday [24 September] gave the go ahead to the signing of an agreement with the U.S. to write off $220 million of Jordan's total debts due to Washington estimated at $702 million.

The Cabinet authorised Information Minister Jawad al-'Anani, who is currently in the U.S. capital, to sign the agreement.

It was Dr. al-'Anani who announced last month that the U.S. would write off the $220 million before the end of September. He spoke on Aug. 5, one day after the U.S. House of Representatives endorsed a compromise foreign aid bill that included a provision for debt relief for Jordan, noting that the rest of the Kingdom's debts to Washington would be deleted in 1995 and 1996.

Finance Minister Sami Qammuh said the U.S. Administration has pledged to write off all Jordan's debts to the United States.

He said also that the Cabinet has set up a delegation to travel to Paris and negotiate the rescheduling of the Kingdom's debts to France.

According to the statement, Michel Marto, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) will lead the team to the Paris talks.

Last month U.S. President Bill Clinton urged the Paris Club which includes France, to act as rapidly as possible to relieve Jordan's financial burden through bilateral debt forgiveness.

The Council of Ministers also Saturday, decided to endorse an agreement on cooperation in administrative fields with Tunisia. The agreement provides for the exchange of expertise and training of personnel.

The Cabinet authorised Minister of Tourism Muhammad al-Adwan to travel to Japan and attend the opening of the Osaka International Airport in November. Dr. 'Adwan will attend the ceremony along with 49 ministers of tourism from around the world.

The ministers also consented to Jordan joining an agreement on nuclear safety with the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and endorsed a trade protocol with Egypt which provides for infields with Tunisia. The agreement provides for the exchange of expertise and training of personnel.

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The Cabinet gave its consent also to Jordan's participation in the Babylon Cultural and Touristic festival to be held in Iraq between Oct. 22 and 26. Two local folkloric groups will participate in the coming festival.

Government Accused of Anti-Media Campaign

JN2609080294 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Sep 94 p 12

[Article by JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Ayman al-Safadi]

[Text] Amman—Eight political parties on Sunday [25 September] accused the government of launching an anti-media campaign which applies pressure means reminiscent of those which were used under martial laws that were repealed after the democratisation process began in 1989.

In a letter to Prime Minister Abd al-Salam al-Majali, the eight opposition parties also charged the government of employing legislation to serve its policies at the expense of freedom of the press.

The opposition eight said the alleged campaign was targetting political and newly established newspapers, with many of these papers referred to court under laws other than the Press and Publication Law.

The parties added that the government was using legislation to curb the freedom of expression and forcing the papers to promote its official policies at a time "when those who violate the law by contacting the enemy are left unpunished."

"Any criticism is considered slander against the government and any word is interpreted as harmful to national unity because this interpretation justifies legal action," the eight parties claimed.

"(We) demand that the practice of detaining journalists and referring newspapers to court are stopped so that they will not lead to the elimination of opposition, something which will deny Jordan a basic pillar of democracy," the parties said in the letter, a copy of which was made available to the JORDAN TIMES.

The opposition groups said that democracy means the emergence of different viewpoints on public issues as well as equal rights for all, "a just application of the law and denunciation of all that is reminiscent of martial practices."

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The parties urged the government to stop all "practices that infringe on public freedoms and threaten the role of the press," demanding that official media allow room for opposition viewpoints since these media belong to the people and the government had no right to "monopolise them."

The opposition eight also demanded that the government punish citizens who violate the law by establishing contact with Israel and normalise ties with it, especially that a committee for resisting submission and normalisation set up by the eight parties is seen as illegal and its statements are banned from publication. [sentence as published]

They said the government's ban on publishing statements made by the committee was politically activated, arguing that the committee is legal because it is an organ of licensed parties.

"The government position aims at preventing views opposed to normalisation of ties with Israel from reaching the people," charged the parties, which included the Islamic Action Front, the Arab Ba'th Party, the Communist Party and other leftists and pan-Arabist parties.

Unlike the case in earlier statements, the committee against submission and normalisation did not sign the letter. The Press and Publication Department has said it was illegal to publish statements made by the committee because it was not licensed and any publication of its activities would violate the Press and Publication Law.

Palestinians' Handling of Economic Ties Seen Flawed

JN2609115494 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Sep 94 p 26

["Highlights" column by Dr. Fahd al-Fanik: "Lip Service"]

[Text] During his recent visit to Jordan, PLO Foreign Minister Faruq Qaddumi made statements to Jordan Television that are representative of the fluid tribalistic discourse used by our brothers within the PLO. It seems that these brothers are not aware of the fact that we no longer accept such discourse, which should not be used in the handling of our bilateral ties.

When asked about the Jordanian-Palestinian economic relations, and the reasons for the delay in reaching a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement to streamline these relations, the Palestinian official, delivering a pan-Arabist sermon, said: The Jordanian and Palestinian economies are indivisible, and so are the Jordanian and Palestinian people. There are no differences or conflicts of interest between the two sides.

In other words, Abu-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi] endorsed the inseparability of the two peoples and economies, although the PLO has failed to endorse a simple economic agreement. I cannot envisage how the two economies can be inseparable if we cannot sit at a table, speak one language, and endorse a simple agreement that allows for cooperation and bilateral trade.

This notoriously traditional practice in inter-Arab ties is reminiscent of the conduct of somebody who evaded income tax. To cover up for his income tax evasion, he delivered a lecture, expressing his willingness to sacrifice his life to defend the homeland even though he was only asked to pay the income tax—a small financial duty.

The important thing in the statements made by Abu-Lutf aired over Jordan Television, even though this was not carried by the Jordanian News Agency, is that the Palestinians are about to launch a Palestinian Monetary Council, whose final goal is to issue a currency to replace the Jordanian dinar. Is this the appropriate mechanism for achieving the unity of the two peoples and economies?

Similarly, during the recent Jordanian-Palestinian meeting attended [on the Palestinian side] by [Yasir] 'Abd-Rabbuh and [Muhammad Zuhdi] al-Nashashibi, we heard sweet rhetoric. An agreement was reached to form a committee that would meet once every month to discuss outstanding issues. At that time, I wrote in this column, saying that this committee would never meet; and that if it were to meet, it would not have the power to resolve disputes. If it were to reach agreements, such agreements would not be endorsed. More than one month has passed since the convocation of this meeting, and no one has reconvened the meetings. More months will pass before the Palestinians might show up. This is a hopeless endeavor.

It is noteworthy that one of our dailies published a frontpage news report on 21 September 1994, saying that 'Arafat is willing to visit Jordan for talks with Husayn as soon as possible. If the news report is true, we have to demonstrate happiness and jubilation over this huge "concession." For Mr. Yasir 'Arafat is demonstrating a willingness to visit Jordan and practice his hobby of kissing, with which we are familiar.

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Buwayz on Peace Process, Syrian Ties

JN2409113194 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1745 GMT 23 Sep 94

[Interview with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Salim Badawi in Paris; date not given, from "The Event" program—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Badawi] His Excellency Faris Buwayz, we would like first to thank you for your participation in "The Event" program. We want to ask what is new in what the Lebanese foreign minister will be carrying to the United Nations this year?

[Buwayz] First, I want to welcome you. Your question was: What is Lebanon carrying to the United Nations. Perhaps it is better to ask: What is Lebanon not carrying to the United Nations? Lebanon today is the last hot front in the Middle East in terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Occupied southern Lebanon suffers from the daily continuous Israeli aggression and from daily ground and aerial operations. Each day, victims fall in southern Lebanon, and a large number of Lebanese detainees are held in prisons. They are not taken care of by humanitarian and human right organizations, which are not allowed and which do not—and here we must tell the truth—seriously seek to monitor their conditions and keep pace with them.

Hence, Lebanon first carries the burden of this hot front. Lebanon also carries part of the weight of the negotiations, which have gone on a long time since being launched in Madrid. At a minimum, these negotiations are not advancing with the required speed or with the expected clarity and accuracy.

In addition to all these things—of course not everything is negative—Lebanon conveys a message to the world, a message about coexistence among various cultures and options. The world is now facing this problem more fully than at any time in the past. Lebanon is facing this problem on all levels. We carry this message, or this clear indication to the world; namely, that despite all that has happened, this homeland will continue to live despite the dangers and to resist all challenges.

[Badawi] Concerning your visit to New York, press reports say that Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi was supposed to lead the Lebanese delegation to New York this year. There was also talk of U.S. invitations and promises to arrange for meetings with the U.S. President, but that the Lebanese president declined.

[Buwayz] Regarding his excellency the president's visit to New York to lead the Lebanese delegation, this issue was not raised at any point. There has been gossip based on the exchange of letters between the Lebanese Presidency and the UN General Secretariat. The Lebanese president responded to a message from the UN secretary general, in which he invited the president to attend the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebrations to be held next year. The president accepted the invitation and said he will make the visit next year. The speculation was based on the confusion over whether this would take place this year or the next year. The Lebanese media, which are known for their imaginative analyses, linked this subject with many other considerations. Thus, the visit of the president of the republic to New York was not raised at any time.

Regarding a possible visit by the president to Washington at U.S. invitation, I believe that the president is not embarrassed at all. I believe that if he receives an invitation, and if the purpose of the visit is important, essential, and reasonable, that the president will accept the invitation.

[Badawi] In other words, can't we say that this information falls within the framework of U.S. calls for disengaging the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the peace talks?

[Buwayz] I do not believe so. The United States knows that there are common points in the negotiations on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks. Although there are some special issues—namely, the occupation of the South and the method of Israel's withdrawal from the South, which are considered special issues in the Lebanese dossier and fall within the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities in the negotiating process—there are also common points regarding the general peace and the requirements of this peace. Hence, the special issue in the Lebanese dossier is the South and Resolution 425. There are also the general issues which Lebanon opted to deal with from the beginning based on Arab solidarity. If some parties have left this solidarity, Lebanon will pursue this solidarity with those who remain.

[Badawi] This means that the Palestinian or Jordanian example has been ruled out. Moreover, concerning Lebanon and Christopher's tours of the region, which have excluded it, Lebanon believes that priority should be given to the Syrian track in order to achieve progress in this track.

[Buwayz] No, this is not the point at issue. Lebanon first believes that the peace should be really fair. Fair means that the peace should be made on an equitable basis; that is, by leaving the bargaining chips in the hands of the negotiators; that none will be forced to lay all his cards on the table and leave the results to God. Secondly, Lebanon has acquired experience from what it saw in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, on Taba and other issues. We in Lebanon believe that presenting general principles that are not explained by certain details threatens the credibility of the general principles and empties them from any substance. Therefore, Lebanon wants a full, accurate, and firm peace agreement. It does not want a general agreement that will spawn future differences.

Second, Lebanon believes that Arab solidarity is beneficial to the peace process, to the Arabs, and to the credibility of the peace process in general. Such peace was intended to be comprehensive. What does the word comprehensive mean? It means that it should be established among all Arabs in the Arab homeland. Who are the Arabs? They are all the Arabs. We cannot hold up a single Arab state to represent all the Arabs. We cannot presume that an agreement between one Arab state and

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Israel will end the Arab-Israeli problem. Therefore, we believe that to preserve the comprehensiveness and credibility of this solution, Arab solidarity is a principle that logically conforms to the nature of this peace. Such peace is deeper than a cease-fire, deeper than a conflict between one state and Israel. This conflict has never been one between Jordan and Israel, between Lebanon and Israel, or between Syria and Israel. Since the very beginning, the conflict has been one between the Arabs and Israel. I thus believe that any solution should be one between all the Arabs and Israel.

From this premise, the Lebanese viewpoint is somewhat different from other viewpoints. It is not a race for a solution. We in Lebanon do not believe that it is in the interest of anyone to stage a race with others. We also believe that Israel will, ultimately, not be decisive in any of the agreements unless it perceives all the tracks together. Hence, I have said in the past that one who believes he is competing with others will have to wait for the others under the sun. He will eventually wait for the others to finish.

Moreover, we believe in the nature of things, in the logic of things. When there is a conflict, negotiations begin on a solution for this conflict. Then an understanding is reached on the future of relations. Then a celebration is done over an agreement. What we see today is a reversal of this logic. Today things begin with a ceremony as if what is wanted is a media show without a basis for any understanding. Normalization then begins and basic issues are raised later on. This is unreasonable.

We believe that bilateral talks are the basis because they will end the conflict. Afterward, we might enter the multilaterals, which are a sort of implementation of a solution and then—or at least with the multilaterals and after the bilaterals—an open proclamation of what happens can be done. Whereas...

[Badawi, interrupting] In your opinion, the impression is that Lebanon is now in a holding pattern, waiting for progress on the Syrian-Israeli track. Is this impression wrong?

[Buwayz] No, we have no objection to that. First, even when the agreement was reached between the Palestinians and Israelis, we showed some reservations about the substance of the agreement. We did not show reservations because the agreement was signed prior to reaching an agreement with Lebanon or anything like that. As I said, we are not racing with anyone. On the contrary, we believe that such peace will not be implemented as long as it is not concluded between all Arabs and Israel. We thus believe that there is no benefit at all from competing in this regard. Therefore, if some believe that there are priorities in some tracks, we will have no objection.

[Badawi] The negotiations you are talking about have been frozen for months. Lebanon has not held negotiations with Israel for months. However, negotiations are being held between Syria and Israel through the Americans and...

[Buwayz, interrupting] This is not true.

[Badawi] I am asking about Lebanon. What prevents Lebanon from negotiating with Israel?

[Buwayz] My friend, this is not true. This information is wrong, or perhaps you have decided to take this position on your own. This is not true. There are negotiations and proposals here and there. Israel made a proposal on a joint military committee. Lebanon took a position. We said: Yes, we support any military committee provided an objective is set. What would this committee do? Is it a committee intended for literature and poetry or a committee intended to reach an objective? If it really wants to achieve an objective, let us set an objective. For us, the objective is to schedule the withdrawal and discuss security requirements.

At that time we said: Let us set an objective by saying that this committee aims to schedule the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon to the internationally recognized borders and also to discuss the security requirements of such a withdrawal. We will then accept this committee. They did not accept this. Rabin then proposed that Lebanon should dissolve the resistance. It would be tested for six or nine months and then negotiations would be held on a withdrawal, and not on the withdrawal from the entire occupied south. We replied that this proposal was also inadequate and that, in the first place, asking Lebanon to stop the resistance without the Lebanese Government having any guarantee about the Israeli withdrawal, is unreasonable—an impossibility. Mr. Rabin knows only too well that it is impossible for any government in Lebanon to adopt such a measure domestically as long as it does not have a guarantee or at least an Israeli commitment to withdrawal. We did not say that we would not do this unless the last Israeli soldier leaves. We said: Let Israel commit itself in principle and let us form a military committee and then let decisions be made on the withdrawal and on the security and stability.

Second, we said that this offer was ambiguous because it did not clearly explain the size, scope, and form of the withdrawal. We do not want partial withdrawal, we want full withdrawal from all the Lebanese areas to well-defined and clear boundaries for Lebanon; namely, the internationally recognized boundaries. Our borders are not subject to negotiations. Why don't we say this? It is difficult for me to say that this ambiguity is unintentional. We must be allowed to be careful in negotiations and in dealing with this case.

Third, we have always asked for clarity on the withdrawal process, meaning that it should be done exclusively in the interest of the Lebanese state, that we will not recognize any withdrawal that would hand the south to an authority that is not the Lebanese state—for instance, to the authority of a militia in the south under the pretext that this militia is Lebanese and therefore, the south is given to the Lebanon. No. Lebanon is represented by a state, establishments, and legitimate security agencies. Therefore, if some imagine that the Israeli proposals...[changes thought] Some believe, that there is no problem for Lebanon and the Israeli proposals are good, as though Lebanon was offered its south

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back and Lebanon rejected the offer. This is definitely illogical. Lebanon has not had any clear and frank proposal that we could relay on and which we believe preserves our national rights.

[Badawi] If such an Israeli initiative is proposed to you, will you be prepared for serious negotiations to reach a peace agreement with Israel before any progress is made on the Syrian track?

[Buwayz] I really do not see the difficulty in this issue. We clearly said that there are two aspects, a special aspect for Lebanon, and a general Arab aspect. The special Lebanese aspect is Resolution 425. Does this resolution call for a peace agreement? It does not. Resolution 425 constitutes a mechanism for withdrawal. We are ready to negotiate and to make all decisions in order to implement this resolution. As for Resolution 242, which calls for peace agreement, and which we support and on whose basis we joined the peace process, we said from the beginning that we would not make any unilateral decision before consulting with other Arab partners. Why? Because this resolution will set a framework for future relations. Is it logical for each Arab country to decide on its own whims and with special and different relations with Israel on this subject? Or is the desired decision an Arab decision that sets a standard level, size, and form for these relations? Is Lebanon asked to outrun everyone or deal separately with steps on its own as if problems are already resolved with the others?

What has happened so far? Most of what has happened has been ceremonial and for the media. They are meetings. But as far as defining ties in the future, I have no knowledge that these relations were defined by anyone.

[Badawi] Do you have information that Syria is really holding secret negotiations with Israel, as Israeli Housing Minister Ben-Eli'ezer and Israeli Ambassador in Washington Rabinovich revealed recently?

[Buwayz] I don't at all believe that Syria is holding secret negotiations for one simple reason: First, I think that if there were secret negotiations, Israel would not have spoken out on this issue every day. I think that the daily hints by Israeli officials—sometimes about secret Lebanese-Israeli contacts, and sometimes about Syrian-Israeli secret contacts—are a sort of attempt to divide the ranks, to sow suspicion between Syria and Lebanon, to stimulate certain parties to hold such negotiations and contacts in the belief that the other Arab parties are doing the same thing. I think that Israel could—at least in this matter—protect the secrecy of the negotiations if they are really taking place. I emphasize that if there were contacts, no one in Israel would have spoken about them in order to protect them. I think that the talk about this subject is aimed at urging such negotiations.

Second, for a substantive reason, I don't think the system of government in Syria could take such a risk, which would eventually mean a sort of recognition of Israel before the principle of withdrawal from the occupied Golan becomes certain. I think that the way the Syrians behave toward this subject is known for those who can read their positions. I do not imagine that they could take such risk before the principle of restoring the Golan is resolved and before they are satisfied.

[Badawi] They also would have informed you of this since the coordination is very strong and is taking place on a high level. Does the Lebanese state have fears—as France does, which it has expressed several times—that reconciliation between Syria and Israel may take place at the expense of Lebanon?

[Buwayz] Deals at the expense of Lebanon are rejected by more than an Arab party. I do not imagine at all that Syria has any interest in this. I think that Lebanese-Syrian relations are something that is discussed by Lebanon and Syria, and I do not at all think that Syria is waiting for a deal from Israel concerning this subject. Furthermore, I think that this peace does not call for changes in political and geographic maps. It is clear that this peace entrenches entities rather than wiping them out. [passage omitted]

Former Iraqi Diplomat Arrested for Counterfeiting

NC2709103194 Paris AFP in English 1011 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Beirut, Sept 27 (AFP)—Lebanese authorities have arrested a former Iraqi diplomat and two of his compatriots smashing a counterfeiting ring, the state security at the defence ministry said on Tuesday [27 September].

The diplomat, who was not named, was a former secretary at the Iraqi embassy in Beirut.

Police launched investigations after seizing 35 million Lebanese pounds (around 20,000 dollars) in fake bills earlier this month in the Syrian-controlled al-Biqa' Valley, it said in a statement.

A week-long inquiry led state security police to arrest the Iraqi diplomat ringleader and his aides seizing an additional 80 million Lebanese pounds (around 42,000 dollars), the statement said.

The men were working out of an apartment in the Kasrawan mountains, the Christian heartland of Lebanon northeast of Beirut, where they kept sophisticated equipment worth 50,000 dollars.

They dealt exclusively in printing fake 50,000 Lebanese pound notes and 100,000 Lebanese pounds notes.

But specimens of currency from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Germany were also found on the premises.

Investigations are continuing to track down other members of the gang.

Two months ago the Lebanese central bank issued 50,000 and 100,000 Lebanese pound notes in an attempt to end the economy's increasing dependency on dollars often quoted in prices for many goods and services.

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Earlier this year, Lebanon arrested four Iraqi diplomats and expelled three others in connection with the April 12 murder of prominent Iraqi dissident Talib Suhayl in Beirut. It also broke diplomatic ties with Baghdad.

Indyk Exclusion From Christopher Team Viewed

NC2409205094 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 12 Sep 94 pp 1, 11

[Article by 'Imad Fawzi Shu'aybi: "Christopher and His Company"]

[Text] Martin Indyk, advisor of the U.S. National Security Council, did not come to the region with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's delegation. We saw in this a sign that the United States realized that the negotiations began addressing details, and that if these details are leaked, Israel's Rabin would find it difficult to say what he wanted to and do his job away from the opposing views of the Likud Party, the hawks of the Labor Party, and the Golan settlers. The U.S. Administration has noticed that details of previous trips have been leaked to the Likud, and this was linked to the presence of Martin Indyk in the U.S. delegation.

It is known that Indyk was one of the professors attracted by the American-Israeli committee to teach at Colombia University in New York and to work as chairman of the advisory committee called the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policies (AIPAC) [acronym as published]. He is known for his strong bias toward Israel and its right wing in particular, with a long-standing relationship with the Likud and with Yitzhaq Shamir personally.

Although Martin Indyk is considered a pragmatic politician with farsighted views, he is the author of the theory of dual containment of Iraq and Iran. He never thought of becoming American except when he was offered his current job, and only 24 hours before his appointment. He was also known as an adviser to the Australian prime minister. Despite all this, he has an immensely dual character, making him both a pragmatist in the extreme and a Zionist dogmatist in the extreme. He can be said to be a pragmatist in appearance, but a dogmatist in essence.

Apparently, the only solution the U.S. Administration found to this embarrassing Israeli infiltration of its negotiating delegation was to send Indyk to Israel as a U.S. ambassador. His exclusion from Christopher's delegation that makes shuttle tours between Syria and Israel, therefore, seems logical, although this is the first time a Jew has been appointed ambassador of the United States to Israel; this had not happened before to avoid double loyalty.

But despite Indyk's absence, the leaks continue. Sami Barlev, the mayor of the Israeli settlement of Qatzrin, revealed details about the proposals Christopher will be carrying to the region: full withdrawal from the Golan within three years, immediate dissolution of 25 settlements, a proposal for withdrawal beyond the 1948 line, and other things. If this proves true, it will mean that the United States has no credibility, that its delegation is infiltrated, that the State Department is not safe, and that the Israeli Likud Party is penetrating the basic structure of the information exchange related to the peace process. We do not want to go very far into this so that we may not look like those who view things from a police perspective, but we advise the American secretary to recompose his delegation before coming to the region.

This, perhaps, explains Israel's insistence on secret negotiations, although Syria's policy is precise. Syria has made no single mistake in the negotiations, and it realizes that details may harm the peace process. This was expressed by President al-Asad in his latest speech. Syria knows that there is a clear distinction between accuracy and secret negotiations because it has nothing to hide from its people. When Israel asks for secret negotiations, it, in a way, shows lack of trust in the American channel. The demand is also a result of the narrow political rivalry between the Labor Party and the Likud Party.

Christopher is once again returning to the region, and we can, at least through the composition of his delegation, read the next probabilities and whether he is carrying anything new. Anyway, if what Barlev says proves to be true, then the U.S. secretary should stay in a place not infiltrated by the Israelis until the negotiations come to an end!

'Extreme Tension' Reported Following Skirmishes

NC2709074694 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Extreme tension prevails in various areas in southern Lebanon following last night's Israeli attacks. The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY reports that a violent confrontation took place between resistance fighters and occupation forces in al-Bayyadah. During the clash, which lasted 2 hours and 30 minutes, enemy forces fired scores of mortar shells and flares. Israeli helicopters also flew over the area. The resistance fighters responded by firing rockets at the radar center in al-Bayyadah. Enemy gunboats approached the coast, directing their spotlights at it. The occupation forces shelled Mazra'at al-Hamra', Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah with mortars.

SLA Soldiers Hurt in Roadside Bomb Explosion

NC2709112794 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1030 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Our military correspondent reports that a roadside bomb planted by terrorists went off in Kafr Falus as a South Lebanese Army [SLA] patrol passed by at 0900 today. Three SLA soldiers were slightly hurt.

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Cypriot President Departs After 3-Day Visit

JN2609134494 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Excerpt] Cypriot President Glavkos Kliridhis left Damascus at 1130 today after a three-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. President Hafiz al-Asad led those who bade him farewell at Damascus International Airport. Also present to bid him farewell at the airplane's ramp were Vice President Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nasir Qaddur, and Cypriot Ambassador in Damascus Konstandinos Malliotis. [passage omitted]

Israeli Reports of Clinton-Peres-Hasan Talks Cited

JN2609175094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Washington—Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres will meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington at the beginning of next week. Radio Israel said Peres will also meet with Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan and discuss with him developments in relations and negotiations between Jordan and Israel. An Israeli Foreign Ministry source said today that preparations have begun to hold a meeting between President Clinton, Peres, and Crown Prince Hasan. Radio Israel said this meeting will pave the way for signing a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

U.S. diplomatic sources said that next week, Jordan and Israel may announce the date for the signing a peace treaty between them. AFP said the date will be announced from the White House during a meeting between Peres and Crown Prince Hasan in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Well-informed sources in Washington said negotiations being held secretly between Israeli and Jordanian delegations to formulate the text of a peace agreement between Jordan and Israel have achieved progress on the issues of distributing water resources and border demarcation .

In another development, a round of Jordanian-Israeli negotiations, scheduled to be held on the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea next Wednesday, was postponed until another date, perhaps 10 October. Radio Israel, which carried this report, said this round of negotiations was canceled because Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah, chief of the Jordanian delegation, and some members of the delegation are currently in Washington.

Commentary: 'Full Peace in Return for Full Withdrawal'

JN2409150094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Since the peace process was launched almost three years ago, Israeli officials have adopted a policy of procrastination and temporization. The former head of the Israeli Government, Yitzhaq Shamir, publicly said he planned to drag the negotiations along for 10 years, during which Israel would impose a fait accompli policy by Judaizing the occupied Arab territories and distancing any peaceful solution from the essence of the two dimensions of Justice and comprehensiveness.

Today, while the whole world testifies to the sincerity of Syria's peace stands, its honest response to peace efforts, and its serious attitude toward achieving it, the Israeli methods of maneuvering have been exposed and the weapon of intransigence—which has placed Israel in a difficult spot—is now useless. Thus, Israel has found that it must take practical stands, having flooded the long march of the peace process with words.

But what is Israel doing at this stage? Has it responded to the peace efforts of the U.S. Administration and declared that it will implement the resolutions of international legitimacy to break the deadlock in the peace process? Is Israel prepared to provide the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace, primarily full withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and western al-Biqa'?

Observers watching the unfolding of the policy of role assignment in the Israeli political arena see clearly how the Rabin government—which came to power through sweet promises of peace—has resorted to a new technique in obstruction, which depends mainly on circumventing international efforts, including U.S. efforts. Therefore, instead of responding to the favorable atmosphere created by President Hafiz al-Asad's speech at the opening session of the newly elected People's Assembly—which won the admiration of the world—the Rabin government has adhered to its intransigent positions and made the tour of the U.S. coordinator, Dennis Ross, end with Ross talking about a wide gap. The world is now obliged to specify the nature of this gap by seeing the simple contrast between the Syrian and Israeli stands.

Syria, on the one hand, has welcomed U.S. efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. Syria has a high measure of self- confidence and knows exactly what it wants. Syria, moreover, has nothing to hide or fear, and it adheres to its national and pan-Arab constants and is committed to the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Israel, on the other hand, is trying to escape the Madrid framework and its international frame of reference to avoid paying the price of peace, primarily full withdrawal. This is part of an Israeli policy that seeks contentment with partial deals, instead of a just and comprehensive peace that restores land and rights to their owners and preserves the dignity and achieves the interests of all.

This is the gap; this is the reality; this is the clear Israeli embarrassment in the face of an international consensus to see a just, durable, and comprehensive peace established.

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Without a doubt, the U.S. efforts—which Washington promised would continue until a just and comprehensive peace is achieved—will continue to fail unless these efforts succeed in facing the policy of obstruction and circumvention practiced by Israel and until Israel declares its desire for peace and commitment to providing its requirements in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. This is because the key to progress shall remain the acceptance of the clear basis of the peace process: Full peace in return for full withdrawal.

Commentary: Israel Must Summon Courage To Withdraw

JN2609152294 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Despite all that is being said in Israel about peace nowadays, Yitzhaq Rabin's government has not yet taken the position required to make this peace achievable. Syria has clearly announced, and is supported by the entire world, that it is ready to achieve a just and comprehensive peace according to the bases agreed upon at the Madrid conference and when the U.S. initiative was launched. The foundations of the peace process are well-known to all. In particular, they are based on the land-for-peace principle. Any talk about peace without the return of the entire Golan, southern Lebanon, and the western al-Biqa' will remain incomplete talk that is unacceptable to Syria or the international community.

It is strange that Israel, which occupied the Golan during the June 1967 aggression, is even procrastinating in announcing its withdrawal from this part of the Syrian territories. Indeed, it is trying to waste more time with illogical proposals that have no connection with the bases of the peace process.

By avoiding an announcement of a full withdrawal from the Golan, or by talking about holding a referendum on withdrawal, Israel is only wasting more time and effort. In the first place, the issue of full withdrawal is not subject to bargaining. The idea of holding a referendum contradicts all international principles, laws, and norms. Referendums and public opinion polls are usually held on a domestic issue. The international community has never seen a referendum about other people's territories and rights. How can a referendum be held on territories and rights that the Israeli officials themselves admit were occupied and usurped through force and aggression?

Syria supports a just and comprehensive peace because it is the essence of its strategy. It has called for this peace since the early 1970s. It still continues to call for that. However, Syria is not ready for an incomplete peace. Peace has many requirements, foremost of which is the issue of full withdrawal. Only when this issue is resolved will it be possible to talk about substantial and large progress in the peace process. However, continuing to submit ideas and proposals that are far from the essence of peace, as Israel is doing, will only prolong the negotiations, waste time, and keep the region in a state of no war and no peace—not to mention the negative repercussions all this will have on the region and its people, security, and prosperity.

Perhaps Israel, which is talking about its apprehensions about its security if it fully withdraws from the Golan, realizes, before anyone else, that peace, not the occupation of territories, is what guarantees equal security to everyone. Continuing to occupy Arab territories, especially the Golan, will not only keep the security of the region and Israel under threat, but will diminish the chance to achieve peace that was provided by Syria through its participation in the Madrid conference and the Washington bilateral talks.

When Israel finds the courage to return the territories and rights to their owners, it will effectively contribute to making peace and to guaranteeing security and stability. Peace will guarantee security in this region. Without this, we will not soon see any new step toward the desired goal.

Press Underscores 'Full, Comprehensive' Withdrawal

JN2709115394 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 27 Sep 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "A Pivotal Role," TISHRIN says: The parties engaged in the conflict in the region, as well as international quarters, are in full agreement about Syria's central role in the peace process.

We have heard the U.S. President on many occasions say that there will be no peace in the Middle East without Syria. The same idea was reiterated time and again by Western European nations and by Russia.

Apparently, some Israeli officials have reached the same conviction. This explains the growing number of voices there that discuss the uselessness of peace without Damascus.

The Arab states have declared their solidarity with the Syrian Arab position. In addition, there is unprecedented Arab popular support for Syria's adherence to pan-Arab constants and its insistence on regaining Arab rights and defending Arab dignity and future.

TISHRIN adds: Damascus has put forward the principle of full withdrawal in return for full peace. Syria's adherence to this principled position has strengthened a universal conviction of the need for full and comprehensive Israeli withdrawal, which is only natural.

No nation on earth accepts or defends occupation. No one can deny the victims of occupation the right to resistance by all means to liberate their territories.

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The paper highlights the futility of secret agreements that seek to evade the obligations stipulated by the international resolutions. The paper notes that the Oslo agreement has deprived the Palestinians of their basic rights and given the Israelis everything.

The paper adds: Developments have shown the increase in Syria's Arab and international weight. Observers here and abroad are now fully aware that peace in the region is impossible to achieve without Syria, and that what Damascus is proposing is the only way to guarantee a just, comprehensive, and viable peace that meets the needs of the people for security and prosperity.

On the same issue, AL-THAWRAH says, in one of its commentaries: When Syria stresses its principled, firm commitment to the peace process, it makes everyone aware of his political and moral responsibilities. Syria wants the international community to champion its laws, without any bias or discrimination. Syria is simply asking for Israel to be forced to comply with the Security Council resolutions on the conflict. Israel should be made to accept the principle of full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, since this represents a basic—if not the only—foundation for building a just and comprehensive peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The fact that cannot be obliterated is that peace shall remain out of reach and almost impossible if Israel fails to declare its acceptance of full withdrawal and if it does not acknowledge the Arabs' just and legitimate rights, primarily their right to restore all their occupied territory.

Minister Views Foreign Trade Reform

JN2609185994 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 18 Sep 94 p 8

[Article by Jihad al-Na'san]

[Text] Dr. Muhammad al-'Imadi, minister of economy and foreign trade, yesterday presided over an expanded meeting attended by the directors general of the ministry's foreign trade establishments, the general managers of banks, free zones, insurance agencies, the Postal Saving Fund, and the heads of the central departments in the ministry. The meeting was devoted to discussing the practical steps by the ministry to implement the national and pan-Arab action program presented by President Hafiz al-Asad in the comprehensive pan-Arab speech he delivered on the opening of the sixth legislative term of the People's Assembly.

The minister began the meeting by saying: We are meeting today to read the words of the president together and to discuss the practical formulas for their application.

The minister added: Whoever reads the words of President Hafiz al-Asad in the People's Assembly will see that they reflect the opinion of the masses and adopt their causes. Even before assuming the presidency, the president's office at the Defense Ministry was open to the masses who sought his help and called upon him to guide them to their objectives. Thus, the Corrective Movement was the beginning of that long road. Whoever reads the president's words will see that they contain very important guidelines on certain issues which are known to us, but the guidelines have opened new scope for action and production.

The minister said: The executive authority is one of the state's institutions. The more it adopts the opinions of the masses, the more it is capable of building, working, and achieving their aims. Institutions that do not express the interest of the masses are neither effective nor capable of comprehending development and change.

The minister continued: I have thought of the role that must be carried out by the establishments in order to interpret the guidelines of President Hafiz al-Asad and found that it is their duty first to express the interests and aspirations of the masses. I wondered: How should these establishments comprehend the change that has taken place, and continues to take place, after the Corrective Movement, so that they can become effective, and move society to the required state of equilibrium?

The minister added: The president spoke about development and change. I would like to pause on this issue. Change is possible in the population and in the nature of people—their cultural and intellectual makeup, awareness, circumstances, and even in the world around them. So, I ask: Does not growth in population mean there is a need for change in the number of bank branches? Does not change in work methods in many world states mean there is a need to comprehend these developments and to deal with the outside world with the spirit of that change which, aboveall, calls for good management?

The minister continued: Every minister has a responsibility to explore the potentials of our society and to continue with the reform process. We in the Ministry of Economy have reflected this reform spirit in our work and proposals and have upheld the values, thoughts, principles, and guidelines of President Hafiz al-Asad. Through the Encouragement of Investment Law, we tried to release the potentials of our society. In his speech, the president referred to this law as one of the important laws passed by the People's Assembly. In the field of foreign trade, we have accomplished great work and covered much ground on the path of encouraging exports. We have also covered much ground in the field of foreign currencies, prices, and other matters.

Addressing the managers, the minister said: We all know each of us needs to go back to himself and to his establishment and think what he must do to implement the guidelines of the president in order to be able to adjust to the change, especially since what is coming is more important than what has passed.

The minister added: We tried in the past to develop our establishments. We are still doing that. In the banking

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field, we brought foreign experts in banking affairs and investment. We are constantly trying to learn what is taking place in the outside world and to build bridges to carry science and knowledge. In 1988, we received experts from the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade- GATT. In the same year, we hosted the secretary general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development-UNCTAD. We also dispatched several people on scholarships abroad. Soon, we will receive the representatives of 25 French companies. So, we are constantly trying to keep up with developments in the world.

The minister continued: We must never consider problems to be too difficult for our willpower. Change does not take place without the willpower of the free, mature individual. You have observed how "Saydaliyah" [Pharmaceutical] Establishment has reduced its debts from $170 million to $30 million and how the Commercial Bank is in a better position today, although we still hope that it will take further steps forward. What we want to say is that the sun will not blind us and obstacles will not discourage us.

The minister said: We aspire to achieve a great deal and to amend certain laws such as:

—The Trade Law: We hope to succeed in amending it soon.

—Decree No. 195: We have some observations which we have submitted. They are:

—Reforming the public sector: We have our opinion on the public sector which we have expressed and we believe that it also reflects what President Hafiz al-Asad has said.

—We are working for the issuance of a new law on shareholding companies which, we hope, will help increase their number. We are trying to closely examine the reasons that prevent the increase of these companies.

—We are working on canceling the taxes on exports. Some people say there must not be taxes on real exports. Taxes on exports go up to 35 percent under Law No. 20.

—We were invited to join the GATT some time ago, and we believe that joining it now is better than joining it later. Delay is not in our interest, nor is it in the interest of the homeland. We will pay the price in the future.

Muhammad al-Sharif, governor of the Syrian Central Bank, then addressed the meeting. He said the president's speech is a gem to be added to the necklace. Al-Sharif discussed some of the practical steps to achieve the objectives and to ensure the capabilities.

Dr. Fua'd al-Sayyid, director general of the State Establishment for Free Zones, said the president's comprehensive pan-Arab speech is a work program. He added: We must concentrate on one important point in the speech; namely, linking ideas to reality. Change is the key to progress.

Speaking on the subject of control, Dr. al-Sayyid said: The main aim is construction. Unfortunately, however, we are encumbered by all forms of control. If we thoroughly examine the situation, we will observe that control emphasizes form at the expense of substance. In our opinion, control in this fashion becomes hindrance.

Dr. al-Sayyid continued: If control continues to be an unleashed sword, making no distinction between what is wrong or right in work, then it would be the biggest obstacle to change. The rule is linking performance to results. We must emphasize that management performance must be assessed on the basis of results.

The minister intervened at this juncture in the dialogue to point out that control should primarily be a kind of self-discipline exercised by every manager. He referred, in this regard, to the suggestion made by Dr. Qasim al-Haj 'Ali, director of the Food Establishment. He said that Dr. al-Haj 'Ali discovered that using 3.5 kilograms of agricultural chemicals in one hectare of land was a high ratio, and so following examination he suggested using 1.5 kilograms in each hectare. The minister said: Dr. al-Haj 'Ali's suggestion was approved. This behavior is a kind of self- discipline.

The minister said: I believe that the president has given us unlimited freedom to link our ideas to reality so that we can change our behavior in harmony with the requirements of the citizens and reality. So, let us change provisions according to our thinking.

Dr. Faysal Summaq, director of the State Tobacco Establishment, then addressed the meeting. He said: I must admit that I am new to this sector—Dr. Summaq served as Syrian ambassador to the former German Democratic Republic and was president of the Federation of Revolutionary Youths—however, I would like to make one remark. Many of the ideas we are now advocating once met with strong resistance. We still remember what Dr. al-'Imadi used to say and repeatedly demand.

Dr. Summaq added: The president has asked to us to link our ideas to reality. I would like to say that as managers we have the will power and the self-discipline. Development and reform has continued since 1970, emphasizing one important fact, namely, that we are moving ahead and encouraging new ideas. The laws are a reflection of this social change.

Regarding control, Dr. Summaq said: Understanding laws according to their rigid literal sense is harmful to all of us. I remember an old German saying which says: "An employee who applies the law literally is on strike without a strike." Dr. Summaq called for competent assumption of responsibility and for drawing up realistic plans for which people can be held accountable.

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Concluding the meeting, the minister called for giving top priority to the question of exports. He said: Our establishments are foreign trade, not import establishments. Exports are a great necessity, since without them we cannot import capital goods.

The minister added: It is inconceivable for Europe to exempt us of taxes on its imports from Syria, while we impose taxes on exporters.

The minister said that the Foreign Trade Center will begin applying a control system on exports effective 1 October 1994 now that it is fully prepared.

Speaking about protectionism and custom tariffs, the minister said: We need to apply protectionism through custom tariffs. Some clauses in the Customs Tariff need to be amended, because it is inconceivable to charge 20 percent duty on raw materials and only 1 percent on machinery such as molds. This means encouraging imports.

The minister continued: We also need to revise cotton prices. Furthermore, It is unacceptable to work with three exchange rates for foreign currencies. This is causing many hardships in statistics and drafting the general budget.

The minister concluded his statement by calling on banks to rely mainly on their deposits in giving credit. This is more ideal than resorting to the Central Bank, he said.

The meeting was concluded with an agreement to form a group which will follow up the practical implementation of President Hafiz al- Asad's guidelines on the basis of the points reached at this meeting and also in light of the memos submitted by the ministry's various establishments.

Finance Ministry Seeks Dual Taxation Agreements

JN2409173494 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 5 Sep 94 p 8

[Excerpt] Several financial violations and problems have occurred recently due to dual taxation, especially with regard to income taxes on citizens and resident aliens engaged in economic activities on behalf of other states. It has become essential to put an end to these matters through coordination and cooperation with other states by concluding agreements to ban dual taxation and to prevent tax evasion.

In view of the importance of this subject, the Syrian Government has begun contacting and coordinating with other states in order to conclude financial agreements in this regard.

The Syrian and Egyptian Finance Ministries have concluded an agreement to ban dual taxation. The Finance Ministry is also holding the necessary contacts in order to conclude a similar agreement with Cyprus. The agreement is ready for implementation as soon as it is ratified by the two governments.

Meanwhile, contacts are currently taking place between the Finance Ministry and official representatives of the Republic of Armenia in order to conclude a financial agreement to avoid dual taxation and prevent tax evasion. [passage omitted]

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Afghanistan

Pakistan Opens Consulate in Herat City

LD2609180294 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] The consulate of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was opened yesterday in Herat city during a ceremony.

A Bakhtar Information Agency correspondent reports from Herat: The opening ceremony of the consulate was attended by esteemed Mohammad Esmael Khan, general amir of southwest zone; esteemed Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Sayed Nurullah Emad; esteemed acting Minister of Culture and Information Sayed Eshaq Delju-Husseini, officials of state offices in Herat; Pakistan's esteemed Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar; staff of consulates of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia, and a number of personnel of the UN organization offices stationed in Herat.

In this ceremony, esteemed Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Sayed Nurullah Emad and Pakistan's esteemed Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar spoke in connection about further expansion and consolidation of relations between both Islamic and neighboring countries and called the opening of Pakistan's Consulate in Herat City as an important step toward expansion of relations between both Islamic countries.

Pakistan's interior minister has recently arrived in Afghanistan, heading a high-ranking delegation from that country, in order to survey the feasibility of a rail link to Central Asia through Spin Boldak [Kandahar Province].

After having talks with esteemed Mohammad Esmael Khan and officials of Herat Province, the delegation left for Turkmenistan.

'Heavy Fighting' Breaks Lull in Southwest Kabul

BK2609120094 Hong Kong AFP in English 1123 GMT 26 Sep 94

[By Terence White]

[Text] Kabul, Sept 26 (AFP)—Heavy fighting resumed between the rival Shiite factions of Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] and Hezb-e Wahdat [Unity Party] in southwest Kabul on Monday, breaking a two-day lull in the battle that has raged for almost two weeks.

Both sides traded heavy weapons fire, witnesses said, and a Scud base controlled by Harakat came under a heavy attack in which five buildings exploded into flames in the area.

Although this 13-day battle started between the two Shiite factions, all major warring factions in Kabul have weighed in to expand the conflict.

The fighting has resulted in between 600-700 civilian deaths and 2,000 wounded up to Saturday, according to foreign medical aid sources here.

Harakat is supported by the forces of embattled President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union] faction leader Rasul Sayyaf.

On the other side, Wahdat is backed by former prime minister Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] faction and the Uzbeks of former pro-communist general 'Abdol Rashid Dostam.

Parallel to bloody internecine Shiite clashes, both Hekmatyar and Dostam have been fighting presidential forces since early January to oust Rabbani.

"Hezb-e Eslami is attacking the Scud base today," said a Harakat official, explaining the five buildings seen burning in the area.

The Harakat-controlled ex-Russian Scud missile base with its huge underground ammunition stores is strategically located on the hills of south Kabul, close to a palace captured by Wahdat in the early days of the fighting.

One of Hekmatyar's senior Hezb-e Eslami commanders has apparently been transferred from the eastern front to the hills facing the Scud base, to support Wahdat's attempts to capture this important position.

There is no official confirmation that the recent arrival here of Rabbani's strongman, ex-defence minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, has any bearing on reports that a major infantry assault is being planned against Wahdat and its allies.

In addition to the heavy shelling around the Scud base in south Kabul there was another heavy bombardment further west around the Kote Sangi crossroads and Kabul University, areas which are controlled by Wahdat.

Throughout the Dashti Barchi western district, Harakat and Wahdat traded steady heavy weapons fire, from which a high toll in civilian casualties is expected.

A report from South Kabul's Karte Se hospital said that doctors were facing a critical shortage of bandages.

Karte Se, with beds for some 280 patients, has had in the order of 325 seriously wounded inpatients in its care since the fighting started.

In the central Shiite enclave of Taimani there are still many posts flying the Hezb-e Wahdat banner but all pictures of Wahdat leader Mazari have been pulled down.

It is understood that the Taimani Wahdat are loyal to Mazari's rival, Mohammad Akbari, who has sided with the Harakat.

The other Shiite group in Taimani, the minority Ismaelia sect whose leader is fighting Mas'ud some 250 kilometres

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north of Kabul, has reportedly surrendered its heavy weapons to Kabul garrison forces loyal to Rabbani.

Scud Base in Kabul Said Taken

LD2609202194 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] This evening the only scud missile base in Kabul was taken over by Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party]. Nateqi, the official in charge of Hezb-e Wahdat's political committee in Tehran, in a telephone contact with IRNA, quoted the secretary general of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami as saying that the said base has several underground depots and was one of the important Afghan missile bases of the previous regime. He added: This afternoon, Afghan Government aircraft carried out several bombing raids on Wahdat-e Eslami bases in Kabul University and Kut-e-sangi. He underlined Hezb-e Wahdat's readiness to accept a cease-fire in Kabul unconditionally.

'Mojahedin' Said To Hold University

LD2609175694 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Kabul University site and its surroundings were captured today by mojahedin.

An Armed Forces source reports to a military correspondent of Bakhtar Information Agency that Kabul University, which was under the control of Mazari's men [Abdol Ali Mazari, leader of Hezb-e Wahdat, Unity Party] in the past two years, was cleared completely this afernoon and came under the control of mojahedin. The source added: In today's clearing up operations, in addition to the seizure of Kabul University, [word indistinct] and security posts around it. Several strong holds of Mazari men located in Qala-e Shada and Pol-e Sukhta have come under the control of mojahedin of Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] and forces of Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement].

Today's clashes began when Mazari men attacked mojahedin of Hezb- e Wahdat-e Eslami in Karazi Darmalton area in Pol-e Sukhta and faced a defeat and retreated. No accurate report is available about the details of today's fighting. Despite this, it has been stated that dozens men from Mazari branch were killed or injured, and therefore, a large number of their arms and ammunition were taken by mojahedin as booty. Details will be published at a later date.

India

Pneumonic Plague Outbreak in Gujarat Reported

'Epidemic' Kills 37 in Surat

BK2409163494 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] In Gujarat, the pneumonic plague epidemic in Surat is gradually coming under control as more and more patients are responding to treatment; 324 patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals. Massive relief operations are on in the city. The epidemic has claimed 37 lives so far. A cleanliness drive has been launched. The state government has appointed the additional chief secretary, Mr. K.V. Bhanujan, as the overall coordinator for supervising the operation. Voluntary agencies have also come forward to help prevent the spread of the epidemic. Our Ahmedabad correspondent, Manoj Agajar, reports:

[Begin Agajar recording] The Surat city, known as diamond city, which is under the grip of pneumonic plague is now gradually coming under control. The patients are responding to the treatment well. Meanwhile, more and more voluntary agencies have come forward to cooperate [in] the state government's operation to contain epidemic. At least a hundred teams are going door-to-door for the distribution of antibiotic drugs to the affected people. One helicopter carrying with 20 lakh tetracycline drugs and 10,000 injections have already been reached to the city. [end recording]

Our correspondent further adds that the state government has declared Ahmedabad, Amreli, Dang, Bharuch, and Ankleswar as epidemic threatened areas.

At Bharuch, the district administration has ordered closure of educational institutions, cinema halls, and other public places till the first of next month as a precautionary measure. Five cases of suspected pneumonic plague have been reported from the Bharuch city during the last two days. The union health minister, Mr. B. Shankaranand, visited the city today along with the chief minister to gather first hand information about the extent of the problem and measures taken so far to control it. Later, talking to newsmen in Ahmedabad, Mr. Shankaranand appealed to the people of Surat not to leave the city. He said pneumonic plague is curable and the required medicines are available in adequate quantity. He assured the state government of all help in containing the disease. The minister appreciated the doctors for the timely medical help extended to the patients. Earlier, Mr. Shankaranand held meetings with the state chief minister, the district officials, and others in Surat and took stock of the situation. He visited the hospitals and inquired about the health of the patients. The chief minister told newsmen that out of 100 samples examined, 60 are confirmed to be of pneumonic plague.

In Maharashtra, the Pune District administration has set up a special Plague Control Cell to monitor the situation and take preventive measures. The Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Delhi Governments have also taken preventive and precautionary measures. The Tamil Nadu Government has stationed a team of doctors at the airport and railway station in Madras to screen those arriving from Gujarat and Maharashtra. The state health minister, Mr. S. Muthuswamy, said that those coming from the affected states will be given preventive tablets.

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The prime minister has directed the union Health Ministry to take all possible steps to ensure adequate supply of prophylactic drugs and medicines. He has also asked the ministry to ensure that insecticides are made available in sufficient quantity. Mr. Narasimha Rao desires that widest publicity should be given to the precautionary measures that can be taken by the people to protect themselves against the spread of the epidemic. The prime minister is personally keeping in touch with the steps taken by the central ministries and state governments to deal with the situation arising out of outbreak of plague in the western region.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has expressed concern over the outbreak of plague in the region. In a press statement in New Delhi today, the Politburo of the party urged the center and the state governments to take appropriate steps to ensure the supply of medicines to the region. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. L.K. Advani, visited Surat city today and went around the affected areas.

'Improvement' Seen

BK2609164094 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Life is regaining its momentum in Surat six days after the pneumonic plague struck the city. People are gradually getting back to their work. Shops have reopened and vehicles are plying. The Gujarat government has launched an action plan for speedy improvement of the situation in Surat city. It includes free distribution of medicine and a cleanliness drive. More than 200 medical teams have been pressed into service for distribution of medicines. No further deaths due to pneumonic plague have been reported from Surat since yesterday. The health secretary, Mr. M.S. Dayal, told newspersons in New Delhi that the condition of all patients except four critical ones are showing substantial improvement. Four-hundred fifty-three patients were undergoing treatment in the hospitals in Surat. Mr. Dayal said there is absolutely no shortage of drugs. He said about 30 million capsules have been arranged and about half of it have reached Surat. The health secretary said so far none of the cases reported from outside Surat has been tested positive for pneumonic plague. Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry has given a special grant of 20 crore rupees for meeting the situation like supply of drugs. Mr. Dayal said it has also assured any additional assistance required.

Several countries also offered India assistance in tackling the emergency. The U.S. ambassador, Dr. Frank Wisner, today met the health minister, Mr. B. Shankaranad, and offered to provide expertise developed by the Communicable Diseases Center at Atlanta. He assured that he will take up with the American Government prompt supply of vaccines as well as antigens for testing of plague cases. A small quantity of antiplague vaccine has come from Russia. The WHO representative in India, Dr. R.P. Shah, has commended the action taken by the Gujarat government in containing the epidemic and the support given to it by the center. He also said that only those who are exposed to the risk of plague disease need take tetracycline as a precautionary measure.

The state chief minister, Mr. Chhabildas Mehta, and leading citizens of Surat city have appealed to the people who left the city to come back as the situation is returning to normal. Our Ahmedabad correspondent reports that the district collector has withdrawn the notification declaring Ahmedabad as a plague threatened city.

The Krishak Bharati Cooperatives—KRIBCO—has denied reports that its urea plant at (Hazira) near Surat has been shut down in the wake of the plague epidemic. The company's managing director said the plant is operating normally. The public sector Hindustan Insecticides has rushed sufficient quantities of insecticides like (Gamixene) to Gujarat to control the plague epidemic in Surat. The company in a press release said the supply of the insecticides to various places in Gujarat is being closely monitored in coordination with the center and the state authorities.

Two Cases Reported in Delhi

BK2709034794 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Concerted efforts by central and state governments to contain the spread of pneumonic plague appear to be yielding results. Life in Surat which bore the brunt of the disease is returning to normal, with government and municipal offices reporting 75 percent attendance yesterday. The coordinator of relief operations in Gujarat, Mr. K.V. Bhanujan, has said the local administration is confident of bringing the situation fully under control in a week's time. One patient died last night, taking the toll in the city to 42 [as heard]. Three hundred and thirty-three patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals in the city, while 88 others have been discharged so far after treatment.

Several state governments have taken measures to detect and check the spread of the disease.

In Delhi, out of the six cases of suspected plague, two have tested positive.

The Maharashtra health secretary has said no case of pneumonic plague has been reported from the state so far, although 34 cases of bubonic plague were detected in Bir and Aurangabad districts. The railways have also started examining the passengers to prevent the spread of the disease.

Hungary Offers 'Intelligence Radars,' Spare Parts

BK2409091394 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] Hungary today offered India high technology intelligence radars and spares for military equipment of

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Russian origin. Talking to newspersons here, the Hungarian minister of state for foreign affairs, Dr. Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, said negotiations are still on. Dr. Ivani earlier had talks with the minister of state for defense, Mr. Mallikarjun, and others.

Press Release Issued on Iranian Official's Visit

BK2309164094 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1454 GMT 23 Sep 94

["Press release" issued on 23 September; place, issuing office not given]

[Text] His Excellency Mr. Alaeddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of Iran, visited India from September 21-22, 1994 to undertake preparatory discussions on the forthcoming state visit to India of His Excellency Mr. Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the president of Iran. Mr. Borujerdi was accompanied by a team of senior officials representing the Iranian ministries of petroleum, agriculture and fisheries, roads and transportation, culture, and science and technology.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister called on external affairs minister, Mr. Dinesh Singh, and ministers of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia and Mr. Salman Khursheed, and minister of state for petroleum and natural gas, Captain Satish Sharma. Two rounds of delegation-level talks were also held between the Iranian delegation and the Indian delegation under foreign secretary, Mr. K. Srinivasan.

The two sides regarded that the forthcoming visit of President Rafsanjani will be a major event in the growing bilateral relationship. The two sides reviewed the status of bilateral cooperation in diverse fields such as petroleum and natural gas, railways, fertilizers, science and technology, agriculture and fisheries, and culture and examined the possibilities of enhanced cooperation. An exchange of views on the regional and international situation also took place.

Memo on Scientific Cooperation Signed

BK2409085394 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Sep 94

[Text] India and Iran have signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in science and technology. The areas of cooperation include biotechnology, supercomputers, telecommunications, nonconventional energy, and oceanography. The Iranian side has shown keen interest in getting their scientific manpower trained in India.

Jammu Reportedly 'Next Target' of Militants

BK2609145594 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 24 Sep 94 p 7

[Text] Jammu, Sept. 23—Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir, is the next target of the militants. This has been established beyond doubt now.

The revelation by arrested militants that they had started giving arms training to youths on banks of river Tawi, on which this city is located, has confirmed doubts of the doomsayers and awakened those who were looking the other way on the threat of militancy to the Jammu region.

Bomb explosions at public places, and in commuter and passenger vehicles within Jammu city since the beginning of this year, and disturbing reports of militants being harboured in surrounding suburbs and countryside, had alarmed the authorities. But that the militants had set up training camps on the river beds jolted them out of their slumber.

The revelations, which were supported by the arrest of nine suspected militants and the recovery of three AK-47 rifles and ammunition, were also disturbing because they spoke of a well-knit link between Punjab and Kashmiri militants, each complimentary to the other. The arrest of Mohammad Faiz alias Billoo of the pro-Pakistan militant outfit, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and his confession that was dutifully relayed by an official spokesman to the media, has revealed many untold stories.

According to officials, there are various reasons for the militants having chosen this city, with population of nearly 300,000 Kashmiri Hindu migrants from Kashmir and notorious for its erratic traffic as the target. Kashmiri militants believe that unless they start their activities in Jammu, it will be construed that they cannot operate in areas not having Muslim majority.

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen had shot into prominence when it assassinated Wali Mohammad Ittoo, the former Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and a frontranking National Conference leader, outside the Jamia Mosque in Khatikan Talab area in March this year.

It is, however, a different matter that the police claim that the assassin, Bashir Ahmed Paddar, a deserter of the State police, met his end at Devser in an encounter.

Iran

Velayati UN General Assembly Address Reported

LD2709115194 Tehran IRNA in English 1040 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] United Nations, New York, Sept. 27, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati outlined Iran's stances vis-a-vis domestic, regional and international issues as well as the problems of the Islamic world at the 49th session of the United Nations General Assembly here Monday.

Speaking on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the U.N., the Iranian foreign minister outlined Iran's views vis-a-vis the role of the U.N. and Security Council at the present world and current circumstamces.

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He noted "rivalry between the superpowers" was one of the major reasons for the U.N. inability to fulfill its duties and regretted that "a few self-proclaimed victors of the cold war feel entitled to dictate the new criteria that determine international relations and guide the United Nations and more specifically the Security Council, arrogating to themselves the right to impose their own vision and self-serving interpretations on the rest of humanity."

Velayati also noted "the transformation of the Security Council into an instrument for justification or enforcement of policies of a number of permanent members is not at all compatible with the spirit of the charter and contradicts the very letter of Article 24, according to which the council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the organization."

He added that the council's failure to adopt a balanced approach in dealing with different crises and its persistent application of double standards, ... "have prevented the council from discharging its primary responsibilty in accordance with the charter."

Velayati referred to Palestine, Lebanon and Syria as examples of the council's "silence and failure to adopt resolute measures in the face of repeated acts of aggression" committed by Israel.

Israel's real and ultimate objective had been to continue its occupation, said the minister adding, "Today, under the disguise of the peace process, this very policy is being pursued through repression of Muslims and all opponents of the illegal and aggressive Israeli occupation. Therefore, in our view, the current process lacks realism and fails to adhere to universal principles and as such will not lead to real peace."

He noted that the comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian issue "lies in the full realization of all rights of the people of Palestine including the return of all Palestinian refugees to their own land enabling them to exercise their inalienable right to self-deremination, and the liberation of all occupied territories."

The minister also argued that the council's unprincipled approach vis-a-vis different crises and aggressions was also demonstrated by its "questionable handling of the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

He regretted that because of "lack of political will to deal with the roots of the crisis," the council not only "failed to implement its own resolutions, but in fact has empowered the aggressors to continue their atrocities and deprived a member state of the United Nations from exercising the inherent right of self-defense through its resistance to the call of international community to lift the unjustifiable arms embargo against the Republic of Bosnia- Herzegovina."

Referring to the fact that Bosnian Government has amply proven its sincere desire for peace, the minister said "it was a source of deep anguish and astonishment to witness that a few days ago the Security Council prematurely rushed to [words indistinct] for nothing more than a tactical move, while months after the acceptance of the latest peace plan by the Serbs, no decision has been made to fulfil the commitment of the 5-nation contact group, including the lifting of the unjustified arms embargo against Bosnia."

The minister further noted that the only way for the U.N. to deal with world issues effectively was that all its members were allowed to "participate equally in decision-making."

Velayati referred to the world's "disarmament" as one of the fundamental issues which [words indistinct] by the U.N. and said, "Today, one of the main preoccupations of international community is the future of arms control, particularly that of weapons of mass destruction, which have no justification in the post Cold War era."

Drawing attention of the international community towards the "hazards attached to stockpiling and horizontal and vertical proliferation" of such weapons, the minister added that the community "must then move to establish comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory international treaties to ensure the elimination and destruction of these weapons in the shortest possible time."

"We believe that the unconditional and indefinite renewal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] will only lead to the possession of these destructive and anti-human weapons by a handful of nuclear powers and the rest of the international community will be forced to live in fear in the dark shadow of these weapons," Velayati noted.

He argued that founding a new world order on the encouragement and institutionalization of discriminatory and vague norms including the conferring of permanent status to such treaties and proliferation of discriminatory, selective and non-universal regimes such as the Australia Group or the London Club, does not augur well for the future of international community and emerging world order." [no opening quotation mark as received]

Referring to Iran as a "victim" of mass destruction weapons, the minister said that the country attributed great value to the Non-Proliferation Treaty "despite the instrument's many inherent shortcomings."

Velayati suggested that the future of the NPT required serious consideration of the critical situation in the Middle East and the nuclear threat posed by Israel.

"Israel's nuclear program has exacerbated the arms race in the region and has forced others within the area to turn to more advanced conventional weapons," noted the minister.

"In addition to Israel's continuous threats," Velayati added, "interference by foreign governments in the affairs of regional states has led to negative perceptions

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and perspectives within the region, which has impeded serious dialogue and consideration of constructive suggestions for creating peace, stability and security in the Middle East and Persian Gulf."

The minister reiterated that Iran, as a country which possessed the longest shoreline along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, had been well aware of its role and responsibility in promoting and maintaining peace and security in the area, had spared no efforts in this regard.

"Today, the largest portion of Iran's national budget is devoted to economic and social development and reconstruction. Many of our military industries have been transformed into non-military units. despite the volatile nature of our region and our own bitter experience as a victim of aggression, only an average of 1.6 percent of Iran's gross domestic product is appropriated for national defence, while some of our neighboring countries continue their purchase of huge stockpiles of weapons," noted Velayati.

The Iranian minister proposed the "creation of a forum" with the participation of the Persian Gulf countries to review and develop confidence building measures compatible with the requirements of the region.

"Maintaining security in the Persian Gulf is the responsibility of the countries surrounding this strategic waterway," said the minister stressing, "Foreign governments, which have often been the source of instability and insecurity in the region, should support collective regional initiatives for cooperation and refrain from sowing discord and tension and other divisive policies to which they have historically resorted in order to preserve their interests and justify their presence."

Velayati noted that efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce tension in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kashmir and Karabakh and its consistent affirmation of the principle of respect for internationally recognized borders, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of others were in line with the country's overall policy geared toward the maintenance and strengthening of stability, security and economic development in the region.

Pointing to Iran's comprehensive and constructive cooperation with the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) [Islamic Conference Organization] to reduce tensions in the said countries, the minister added that in all such peace-keeping efforts, the Islamic Republic had welcomed consultation and cooperation with all interested states and international organizations to contain the crises and prevent or mitigate their disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Velayati stated that Iran as a founding member of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was actively engaged in promoting free and joint ventures among the member states of this organization and hoped that ECO observer status at the U.N. would help enhance collaboration between ECO and various U.N. organs and agencies.

He also stressed that Iran had endeavored to establish "Caspian Sea Cooperation Council which would ensure and monitor environmental protection and proper utilization of its resources by littoral states." The regional efforts had laid the groundwork for multilateral cooperation between Iran, Central Asian states and industrial countries, he noted.

Regretting that the dangerous phenomenon of "Lack of respect and tolerance for values and beliefs of others" was gaining momentum in Western countries, Velayati said that more effort should be made to foster and promote understanding of and respect for diverse values of different peoples and nations through, inter alia, constructive dialogue and the implementation of a strengthened system of consultation.

"A similar problem is manifested in the approach of the international community vis-a-vis the dangerous menace of international terrorism in all its forms," noted Velayati adding "Political consideration and reluctance to prevent terrorist activities by groups whose positions correspond with the policies of certain hegemonic powers have indisputably impeded interantional efforts for eradication of international terrorism and are thus unjustifiable."

He pointed to the ending of the first half-century of the U.N. existence and hoped that the body would abandon its old methods which have lost their credibility, and develop new ways which are compatible with the purposes and principles of the charter while corresponding to the changing international environment.

Holds Meetings with Counterparts

LD2709093294 Tehran IRNA in English 0903 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] United Nations, New York, Sept. 27, IRNA—The Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati who is currently here for the U.N. General Assembly, said here Monday that the reason behind Washington's propaganda against Iran is Iran's strong opposition to U.S. hegemonic tendencies in the region.

In a meeting with his Japanese counterpart Yohei Kono, the Iranian foreign minister further outlined Iran's role in the establishment of peace in the Persian Gulf region and in Central Asia.

He also exchanged views with Kono on mutual ties and major regional and international developments.

Kono termed Iran's role in the region as important and described Tehran-Tokyo bilateral relations as good.

In another meeting, Velayati reviewed regional and international developments especially those pertaining

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to the Islamic world as well as situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina with his Indonesian counterpart Ali Alatas.

Velayati also met with his Thai counterpart Prasong Sunsiri in which the two foreign ministers stressed cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in east and west Asia.

Velayati stressed that the condition was ripe for all-out cooperation among members of the two organizations and Sunsiri expressed hope for further expansion of Iran-Thailand ties.

Velayati further added that President Rafsanjani's forthcoming visit to Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei would have fruitful outcome for coopeation between ECO and ASEAN.

Meanwhile, ECO Secretary General Shemshad Ahmad Khan in a meeting with Velayati Monday, informed him of the forthcoming joint ECO-EU meeting to be held on the side-lines of the U.N. general Assembly meeting.

In another development, Tajik Foreign Minister Rashid Alimov and Velayati Monday called for rapid dispatch of U.N. observers to Tajikistan to monitor ceasefire between state forces and the opposition.

Alimov appreciated Iran's constructive efforts for the achievement of peace and national reconciliation between belligerent parties in his country.

The agreement for the establishment of ceasefire in Tajikistan was signed between the two sides at the end of the second Tajik peace talks in Tehran. The third round of the talks is to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Velayati reiterated Iran's readiness to preserve achievements gained at Tajik peace talks in Tehran and said that bridging viewpoints of the two countries would have an effective role in materialization of national reconciliation in that country.

Diplomat Assesses Relations With Kuwait

NC2609125394 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 18 Sep 94 p 12

[Interview with Ambassador to Kuwait 'Ali San'ati by unidentified ETTELA'AT correspondent—date and place not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [ETTELA'AT] As you said, conditions after the Persian Gulf war were suitable for mutual trust between the two countries. How do you view the record of Iran-Kuwait relations in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war?

[San'ati] Since the Persian Gulf war, conditions have emerged that are conducive to reciprocal trust between the two countries. In other words, the two countries have made a wonderful beginning in forging relations. After the reopening of the Iranian Embassy at the conclusion of the Persian Gulf war, Sadeqi, who took over as the Iranian ambassador in Kuwait, made extensive efforts to consolidate relations between the two countries.

Kuwaiti officials also displayed cordial inclinations and expressed interest in Iran's collaboration in the country's reconstruction. Iran extended its unstinting assistance in this regard.

Similarly, during the time of the occupation of Kuwait, we accepted a large number of refugees from Kuwait into Iran. In other words, during the time of the Iraqi attack on Kuwait, Iran opened its doors to Kuwaiti refugees, and when the occupation ended, the refugees returned home freely.

In any case, the record of relations between the two countries in the political field has been toward expansion; the trend has been similar in the economic field. During the past two years, the two countries have not had any particular problems.

In the political and economic fields, as within international organizations, we have had cordial cooperation. In OPEC, as well as on the regional level, we have cooperated well, and in fact relations between the two countries are becoming stronger and expanding.

[ETTELA'AT] It appears that Iran attaches great importance to its relations with Kuwait. Prior to taking charge of the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait, you were deputy foreign minister. Could you assess the choice of a deputy foreign minister as ambassador to Kuwait against this backdrop?

[San'ati] This analysis is correct as regards my selection for this post. Iran envisions the beginning of a new chapter in relations with Kuwait.

As the Iranian ambassador to Kuwait, I am responsible for taking measures to broaden and strengthen relations between the two countries, to eliminate problems. I hope to expedite the removal of these problems between the two countries in my capacity as plenipotentiary and ambassador extraordinary and God willing, I hope I can be successful.

[ETTELA'AT] Iran and Kuwait have displayed remarkable scope for broadening cooperation. However, this has not been the case in the economic field. What is the reason for such a situation, and why has news about relations between the two countries been so limited?

[Sana'ati] Cooperation in the economic field has not been limited; it is not as if we have not acted in this regard. It simply appears this way, as we have had traditional relations with the Persian Gulf countries.

As a matter of fact, traditional relations are usually forged through the private sector; therefore, the feedback is limited. Although the volume of our exchanges is not remarkable, we do not have any particular problems in this field with Kuwait. Naturally, the broader our relations with Kuwait, the more it is to the benefit of the two

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countries. Currently, most of the cities in the southern provinces have economic exchanges with Kuwait by sea. [passage omitted]

[ETTELA'AT] At present most of the littoral states in the Persian Gulf have territorial differences. Even Kuwait, which has just been liberated from the crisis of its occupation, is still involved in territorial disputes with its neighbors. On this side of the Persian Gulf, Iran does not have any problems with its neighbors. Could you describe this lack of similar problems between Iran and Kuwait as another of our prerogatives stemming from the cordial nature of relations between the two countries?

[San'ati] We do not have any border disputes with Kuwait, as you mentioned, and this is the source of the strength of our relations. The only issue is that of the Continental Shelf, which is a technicality and is currently under study.

I wish to reiterate here that Iran has expressed its complete willingness to cooperate with the Persian Gulf countries in establishing security in the Persian Gulf. However, cooperation between Iran and Kuwait can also expand in other dimensions. This is because currently Iran has immense possibilities for forging relations between Kuwait and the Central Asian countries, as these countries have a lengthy border with Iran. In addition, these countries have recently become members of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] and enjoy warm and cordial relations with Iran.

Iran is a bridge that links the Arab littoral states in the Persian Gulf with the Central Asian countries and can thus link them economically with regard to the two aforementioned aspects. Iran is the shortest and safest land, air, and sea route for this purpose and can act and is willing to act as an intermediary between the Persian Gulf countries and Central Asian countries.

[ETTELA'AT] Kuwait has become a venue of rivalry among foreign countries in the economic and commercial fields in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war. However, the presence of Iran in this competitive field appears very lackluster despite its close proximity with Kuwait and the abovementioned reasons. What could be the reason for this?

[San'ati] Iran does not merely seek a presence in countries for the sake of amassing benefits, as is the case with Western countries. Despite favorable conditions for broadening cooperation, we have delegated this initiative to the Kuwaitis. We have expressed our willingness for all kinds of cooperation and assistance and, henceforth, if the Kuwaiti Government makes any such request we will eagerly respond to it.

[ETTELA'AT] Prior to the occupation of Kuwait and the Persian Gulf war, there were many Iranians working in Kuwait. Kuwaiti officials frequently mentioned that Iranians have played an active role in the economy of that country. Following the occupation of Kuwait, these Iranians came to Iran, and after the Persian Gulf war and Kuwait's liberation from Iraq they returned to Kuwait. This return did not include all the Iranians who had been employed there earlier. What was the reason for this? Also, what role is the Iranian workforce playing in the economy of Kuwait at present?

[San'ati] Following the end to the occupation of Kuwait all Iranian workers immediately returned to Kuwait. We are currently negotiating with Kuwaiti officials so that they may permit the Iranians to return to their previous jobs. However, the labor regulations for foreign workers have undergone a change, and it is up to employers to formulate terms and conditions. This is why the issue of foreign workers has encountered difficulties as regards remuneration and the nature of the work.

We hope that in the near future Kuwaiti officials will permit the Iranian workforce to regain its position in the employment market of that country.

[ETTELA'AT] What is the nature of relations between Iran and Kuwait at the regional level?

[San'ati] We have relatively more cordial relations with Kuwait than with other Persian Gulf countries in the region and we are seeking to broaden and strengthen them.

I believe that we should place greater emphasis on our longstanding relations and cooperate in the politico-economic field. As I mentioned earlier, this is my real assignment.

[ETTELA'AT] In view of the relations between Iran and Kuwait, and in turn, between Iran and the Persian Gulf countries, one may conclude that it is generally accepted today that Iran is not a threat to peace in the region, but is instead a proponent of peace and stability. To what extent do Kuwaiti leaders subscribe to this viewpoint?

[San'ati] This topic has of course been the main axis of our talks with officials of the Persian Gulf countries, and we have also affirmed this fact in practice. I believe Kuwaiti officials concur.

What is important for us is that all the Persian Gulf countries have reached the conclusion that Iran is not a threat to peace in the region, but is itself a victim of war just as Kuwait was. In fact, this common denominator makes it possible for Iran and Kuwait to be the proclaimers of peace in the region and to call on other countries to cooperate so that regional cooperation may be forged for the establishment of peace and tranquillity in the region. [passage omitted]

[ETTELA'AT] As you mentioned earlier, Iranian-Kuwaiti relations can reach a level that enables Iran to act as a bridge to link Kuwait with Central Asia. What would be the results of this?

[San'ati] Following the dismemberment of the former Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries metamorphosed into independent markets, and nearly every

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country in the world initiated extensive economic activity in this region. The Muslim-inhabited republics expressed their interest in becoming ECO members, and their application was accepted after endorsement by the other members.

Within the framework of ECO, which is an economic and developmental organization in the region, most of the countries, especially the Central Asian countries, wish to interact. Iran is the best channel to link them with the Persian Gulf. With its land, sea, and air facilities it can easily do so. The distance by sea between Iran and Kuwait is very short, and we can guarantee passage through Iran to the Central Asian countries. In brief, we are interested in fostering cooperation and are ready to talk to the Kuwaitis on linking them to the Central Asian markets. [passage omitted]

U.S. 'Plot' Asserted at IAEA Session

LD2709105794 Tehran IRNA in English 1033 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Vienna, Sept. 27, IRNA—Iran's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Sadeq Ayatollahi said that the Islamic Republic of Iran in a statement at the 38th session of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unveiled a plot to safeguard interests of the Zionist regime.

He told IRNA here Monday that the Swiss head of the session had declared approval of the statement for the resumption of the agency's assistance to Israel without first having put it for votes and while paying no attention to the objections of the Iranian delegation.

The Iranian delegation immediately issued a statement protesting the measure which was taken as a result of secret negotiations between the U.S. and its allies, Ayatollahi said.

While representatives of Jordan, Sudan and Lebanon expressed concern over the approval of the statement, Saudi Arabia's representative confirming the measure strongly opposed to voting for the statement.

Ayatollahi noted that the U.S. and the Zionist regime associated the resumption of the agency's assistance to Israel with the issue of rendering help to the Palestinian self-rule in Gaza-Jericho and approved it without voting.

The Iranian official also pointed to remarkable achievements Iran has made in the peaceful application of nuclear technology and the progress it has made in this regard.

Given Iran's reasonable stance in connection with nuclear technology and the progress it has made in this connection, some IAEA managers have suggested that Iran could become a base in the region for regulating cooperation between the agency and regional countries, he added.

On the smuggling of nuclear materials, the official said that the U.S. had planned to raise the issue at the IAEA general assembly to misuse it politically. But, he added, it was referred to the general committee through Iran's efforts.

Stressing that the U.S. police had a hand in the smuggling of nuclear materials, Ayatollahi remarked that the U.S. pursued propaganda objectives by arising such issues.

Khomeyni Says U.S. Still 'Number 1 Sworn Enemy'

LD2609131194 Tehran IRNA in English 1233 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Tehran, Sept. 26, IRNA—Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, son of the late imam Khomeyni, stressed here Sunday that the U.S. was still Iran's number one sworn enemy and said that the Iranian nation would never surrender to the pressure of the U.S. and other big powers even for a single moment.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khomeyni, addressing a group of bereaved families of the martyrs of the Islamic revolution, also said that the Iranians were not the least scared of the U.S.

He further commented that the Iranians had (?fulfilled their) task by putting an end to the domination of the U.S. and other big powers in Iran.

He stressed that removing the economic bottlenecks and rendering economic supports to the deprived masses was a necessary measure to build up a healthy economic and social environment. He regretted that tiny and big capitalists were still sucking the blood of the deprived people.

"Some believe that valuing the private sector means granting freedom to capitalists in a way that they could suck people's blood as much as they wish. This is not true. The late imam had stated from the very beginning that ulema are against the capitalists because they would not allow deprived masses to lead an ordinary and healthy life," he added.

He went on to say that the problem now was not merely the Western countries opposing Iran but rather the big capitalists.

The imam's son underlined the need for a decisive confrontation with what he called "economic terrorists" who had hurt social security and health.

Draft Railway Agreement Signed With Turkmenistan

LD2609205694 Tehran IRNA in English 2044 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Province, Sept. 26, IRNA—The Managing Director of Iranian Railways Department Sadeq Afshar and his Turkmen counterpart Khaleqov in a meeting here signed a draft regarding regulations for

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transfer of goods, exchange of information and experience and expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

Afshar told IRNA on Sunday that the draft will be finalized after an approval by the two countries' authorities.

He said that the way for exploitation and use of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railways and bringing about the transit facilities in the connecting network of Iranian and Turkmen railways were among the articles of the accord signed between the two countries.

Also present at the meeting was the Iranian Deputy Minister of Roads and Transport Bahrami who said that the connections between Artiq railway station in Turkmenistan's territory and Lutfabad railway station in Iranian territory are to be established soon.

He said that the establishment of the international railways of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan was started in the year 1992 and is to be completed in the year 1995 in order to make railway connections between the central and north-east Asian republics.

"The length of the railroads is 295 kms. out of which some 165 kms. from Sarakhs to Fariman lies in the outskirts of Mashhad," he said, adding that some rls. [rials] 325 billion and dlrs. [dollars] 100 million was spent on the project.

He also said that the capacity of the goods to be carried out by the railroads will be some 2 million tons of goods and it can be increased up to 8 million tons of goods in a year.

Khaleqov expressed his satisfaction over the bilateral cooperation in the field of railways and asked for promotion of the cooperation between the two countries.

The Turkmen delegation at the end of their visit to here left Iran for home on Monday after paying a visit to Lutfabad customhouse to see the way in which Lutfabad is connected to Artiq by railways.

Commander Describes Defense Industry Capabilities

LD2709101094 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0740 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Excerpts] Dear listeners, we now draw your attention to an interview given by Brigadier General Najafi, the esteemed commander of the ground forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the occasion of Holy Defense Week.

[Begin Najafi recording] On the occasion of Holy Defense Week, I would like to offer my congratulations to the great leader of the revolution, the commander in chief of the Armed Forces, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, and the families of the martyrs. [passage omitted]

We took major steps last year [year ending 20 March 1994] toward self-sufficiency. We concentrated our efforts mainly on the maintenance of our equipment. Our second priority was the repair and reconditioning of our equipment; ultimately, we aim to manufacture this equipment.

The Islamic Republic's ground forces are proud that they are first in the Middle East to build tanks themselves, without importing the technology of the major manufacturing countries. That is, we were the first manufacturer of tanks in the region without the purchase of the technology.

We also took steps to modernize the Babr-400 tank-transporter. We intend to pursue the task of mass production of this tank-transporter, God willing.

Success was also achieved in the reconditioning of helicopters. The committed personnel of the Airborne Division reconditioned 90 helicopters. We began the mass production of parachutes, which were put on display. We plan to increase production, God willing.

Our loyal personnel are working day and night to repair and recondition various marques of tanks, personnel-carriers, artillery pieces, telecommunication equipment, heavy plant, engineering machinery, and other equipment. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Pakistan

Ghafoor Calls U.S. Grants 'Dubious'

BK2609125294 Karachi DAWN in English 26 Sep 94 p 3

[Text] Karachi, Sept 25—Jamaat-i-Islami [JI] deputy chief Prof Ghafoor Ahmad said on Sunday [25 September] the government should seek ratification of all agreements reached with the United States from a broad-based parliamentary committee.

Commenting on the unprecedented U.S. aid to Pakistan, he said that a sudden grant of 54 billion to Pakistan was more dubious than heartening.

He expressed his surprise over the sudden investment by the U.S. entrepreneurs to the turn of half of the annual budget of the country.

Prof Ghafoor said at present the government and the opposition are at loggerheads with each other and the country is in the grip of lawlessness, but the visiting U.S. team, led by Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, has expressed satisfaction at the overall situation in the country.

He said the US delegation was well informed on Pakistan's situation. However, its endorsement of the deterioration was not acceptable to common man. "Maybe, they (U.S.) want to keep this on for their own gains," he added.

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The JI leader said the U.S. produced 40 per cent of electricity through its atomic power plants, but none of the 12 power plants to be constructed in the country would be run through nuclear energy.

He claimed that the U.S. would complete its investment (54 billion) by the end of 1997, a year before general election in the country.

"Pakistan wants to promote cordial relations with the U.S., but the latter prefers in propping up Indian hegemony in the region," he accused.

He said all the regional countries including Pakistan, Sikkim, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives had survived the Indian aggression of late, but despite these grim realities, the U.S. wanted to see Indian supremacy in the region.

To meet its target, he said, the U.S. was trying to denuclearise Pakistan by offering various incentives and the recent aid was a part of that game.

Lashing out at the opposition, he said, it (opposition) had engaged itself in animosity with the government and forgotten the issue of national security.

Commentary Terms O'Leary's Visit 'Very Successful'

BK2609132794 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Commentary by Dr. A.R. Kamal]

[Text] The visit of U.S. energy secretary has indeed been very successful, as agreements worth $4 billion have been signed between the American and Pakistani investors in the field of energy. The main thrust of U.S. businessmen has been toward the power generation. The agreements have been related to both small as well as large power units. Some of the major power units, which would start generating electricity over the next three to four years include Enron project, Kabirwala power project, Habibullah power project, (Subco) power project, Uch power project, and (Wapgas) Pak project. Another company has also agreed to set up a hydroelectric plant with the capacity of 75 megawatts in the Punjab.

These agreements signify not only a major development in the economic relationship between U.S. and Pakistan, but also an accelerating foreign investment in both the energy and energy-related projects; but also in the flow of investment from multinationals in the manufacturing and other sectors of the economy.

Pakistan has been striving hard to encourage foreign investment in all the sectors of the economy, but so far the pace of investment has been slow. Quite a few factors have been enumerated in the slow response of the investors. Lack of poor infrastructure and load shedding [power blackouts] have been identified as the main factors in this regard, besides law and order and political situation. While efforts are under way to improve law and order situation, but when economic policies continue as the government changes, the political stability from an investors' standpoint is not all that important. Government has mounted efforts to improve the situation in infrastructure. Road and rail networks are being modernized and telecommunications corporation is being privatized. Nevertheless, the differential between the demand and supply of electricity is so much that the government could not muster the resources. Whereas government had an energy policy, yet it did not result in a significant way in private sector participation in the energy sector. A few months back, government announced a new energy policy which not only raised the price of electricity at which WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] would buy from the investors but also ease the implementation process. Response has been quite encouraging.

The U.S. energy secretary's visit and the agreements reached show very clearly the success of the policy. It is significant that the agreements of U.S. firms with Pakistani firms would encourage a number of companies in the other countries to follow suit. As a matter of fact, already few countries have shown interest in that direction. Except for one hydropower project, all other power projects are thermal. Enron power project would cost $850 million and would generate 760 megawatts of electricity. This project is a combined cycle project and would use naphtha as fuel. The project will be allowed to import naphtha. At a cost of $175 million, Kabirwala power project is sponsored by the Fauji Foundation. Similarly, Habibullah power project would be completed at a cost of $109 million and would have a generation capacity of 104 megawatts. (Subco) is implementing a project of $174 million for the generation of 310 megawatts. At a cost of $600 million, the project at Uch would generate 584 megawatts of electricity. A WAPDA project of 800 megawatts is a large (?mounted) power station which would use heavy fuel oil. Besides these thermal power stations, a small project of 25 megawatts shall be established in the Punjab, which shall be a hydroelectric project. It clearly indicates that projects of all sizes are being sanctioned, approved, and agreed. Accordingly, it is hoped that load shedding problem shall be over in the next three to four years. Since load shedding has been a stumbling block to the foreign as well as indigenous investments, the foreign investment in energy would bring more investment into the country. The U.S. has taken the lead and the other countries are expected to follow. The investment must have been a morale booster. It may be noted that whereas the government's program regarding infrastructures are very helpful in convincing the people that by the time these projects will be completed they will be available, the investment from multinationals would convince the investors beyond any doubt that load shedding problem would be resolved.

Pakistan may be prepared for significantly larger investment in the coming years. The visit of U.S. energy secretary has brought the investment into Pakistan. It is

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no more just the interest of foreign investors, they have signed agreements and are going to install the plants soon. The visit may turn out to be the cornerstone in the economic history of Pakistan.

Foreign Secretary Discusses Kashmir With UK Official

BK2709121294 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 27 Sep 94

[Text] Britain has conveyed its concern to India over the violation of human rights in occupied Kashmir and urged it to hold negotiations with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute. This was stated by (Anthony Baldwin), the British parliamentary under secretary of state, during a meeting with Foreign Secretary Najmuddin A. Sheikh in Islamabad yesterday. (Baldwin) said his government has made it clear to the Indian authorities that the status quo in occupied Kashmir cannot be prolonged.

The Pakistani foreign secretary briefed the British parliamentary under secretary of state on the continued atrocities and repression in occupied Kashmir and underlined the need for greater international support for protecting the human rights of the Kashmiri people. The two sides exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan, Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan; and other regional issues. (Baldwin) appreciated the steps taken by Pakistan for the restoration of peace to Afghanistan and its contribution to the UN peacekeeping efforts.

Kashmir Conference Scheduled for London in Nov

BK2609162494 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] A Kashmir conference will be held in London in the first week of November to put pressure on India to stop human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad today, the British MP and vice chairperson of All Parties Kashmir Group in the British House of Commons, Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock, said the conference has been organized to awaken world conscience and to persuade Commonwealth to play an effective role in solving the Kashmir issue which has become a flashpoint in the world. Mrs. Peacock said about 200 British parliamentarians are supporting Pakistan's stand on Kashmir issue.

Turkmen Minister Welcomes Transit Trade Agreement

BK2709100694 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 27 Sep 94 p 4

[Text] Islamabad—Turkmenistan and Pakistan have agreed to use the Herat-Kandhar-Chaman-Karachi route for transit trade activities between the two countries, says a message received here Monday [26 September].

Turkmenistan was represented in the high-level talks by Deputy Prime Minister Sarjayev Batyz and Deputy Prime Minister and in charge of Trade Affairs Mr. Saparov, while Federal Minister for Interior Affairs Maj. Gen. (R) Nasirullah Babar and National Highway Authority chairman Maj. Gen. Hidayatullah Khan Niazi represented Pakistan [words indistinct].

Deputy Prime Minister Batyz welcomed the Pakistani delegation, saying it was a matter of satisfaction that the high-level delegation of highway construction experts led by Nasirullah Babar was visiting Turkmenistan on the desire of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

He said the government and people of Turkmenistan desire an early start of trade activities between the two countries. He said pragmatic measures are necessary to improve and extend the highway network in Afghanistan.

He said the concerned provincial governments in Afghanistan have accepted responsibility for providing protection to the trade caravans following the Herat-Chaman route, and the whole credit for this success goes to the government of Pakistan and Nasirullah Babar.

He said highway construction experts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan will review this route in detail in October and will make recommendation for improving it.

He lauded the Afghanistan Government's decision to begin trade activity with Pakistan on an experimental basis by the end of October.

He said the success of this experimental trade will provide the Asian States an easier approach to the deep sea port of Karachi.

Mr. Batyz said the Asian States are facing numerous difficulties after independence.

He said these states are blessed with natural resources and if their relations with the East and West are not restored, these states will not have full advantage of their independence and freedom.

Therefore, he said, it is incumbent on the world, and the world of Islam in particular, to endeavour to establish relations with these states, which would pave the way for a strong economic system in the Asian States.

Leghari Attends Naval Exercise, Inspects Ships

BK2509152594 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari attended the inaugural session of the naval exercise Hammerhead at the PNS [Pakistan Naval Ship] Haider, the maritime headquarters of Pakistan Navy, in Karachi today. The naval exercise, which began today, is a regular feature of Pakistan Navy and is conducted annually to carry out the test of professional skills and (?concepts) of the senior naval commanders in the ever-changing regional and maritime scenario.

The president attended the presentation of the exercise. The chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sayeed M. Khan,

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explained the aims, objectives, and other professional details of the exercise. This was followed by presentation on orange and blue (?concepts) of the operation made by the respective commanders conducting the exercise. Various aspects of the exercise Hammerhead 94 were also highlighted during the presentation.

Later, the president visited PNS Iqbal and inspected an indigenously assembled (?major) submarine. The president went round various units of the submarine. The president later boarded a missile boat and witnessed a professional demonstration presented by various units of the Pakistan naval fleet. The president witnessed the demonstration of recently acquired naval ships, including the logistics support ship PNS Mwavin. [Words indistinct] and submarine hunting operation by Sea King helicopters also gave their demonstrations in the high seas.

Sectarianism Seen as Greater Threat Than India

BK2309140794 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 14 Sep 94 p 4

[Excerpt] Lahore, Sept 13: Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo, Chief Minister Punjab, said on Tuesday that sectarianism posed a greater threat to Pakistan than the one posed by India.

He said the government was considering ways and means to control sectarianism. At the first stage the government machinery including provincial ministers are engaged in negotiation with the respective parties in order to bring a change in their attitude.

He said if this method does not work the government will have to take harsh measures to check it. He said it was very unfortunate that people were being killed in attacks on mosques.

Speaking at a book launching ceremony of Dr Muhammad Arif's work entitled Tehrike-e-Pakistan, the Chief Minister said, political parties and democratic process go hand in hand.

The Chief Minister said differences in political parties are the norms of a democratic process. On important national issues political parties need to develop a consensus. He said political parties could express their differences in a more polite and decent ways. They must tackle political matters with courage. There should be no difference of opinion for instance over maintenance of law and order as this issue concerns all sections of society.

Mr Wattoo said for the maintenance of law and order every citizen has to make his contribution. He pointed out that law and order situation in the province was under control and the government was deputing better trained and able officers in this. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka

75 LTTE Men Killed, 200 Injured in Battle

BK2609015494 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 26 Sep 94

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 75 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militants were killed and 200 injured in a fierce gun battle near Palali in Jaffna yesterday. The fighting took place when troops backed by air support attacked a major concentration of LTTE cadres in the area. Two soldiers and an officer were also killed. This is the second major clash between LTTE and security forces in a month, putting pressure on the already strenuous peace process. Last week some militants had sunk a Sri Lankan naval vessel, killing over 20 soldiers in the western coast near Mannar.

Officials on Restructuring of Intelligence Services

BK2509124794 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Sep 94

[Text] Sri Lanka's police intelligence service is to be reorganized and restructured with effect from 1 October. Senior police officials told LANKAPUVATH that the National Intelligence Bureau will be restricted to research and analysis under the minister of defense. A Special Branch, which will have intelligence gathering as one of its major functions, is to operate directly under the IGP [Inspector General of Police], (?Sir) de Silva.

Originally, in the post-independence years, intelligence gathering activities were done by the Special Branch and later the Intelligence Services Division, which functioned directly under the IGP. Under the last government, the National Intelligence Bureau was created and it functioned under the Ministry of Defense.

Presidential Election Campaign Previewed

BK2509155794 Colombo VIRAKESARI in Tamil 11 Sep 94 p 4

[Article by Mathorupakan: "Political Strategies for the Presidential Election in the New Scenario"]

[Text] A new trend in the country's political culture has been seen since the People's Alliance came to power. It is apparent that this trend has created a conducive atmosphere to find a just solution to the outstanding ethnic conflict in the country.

The upcoming presidential election will ensure the continuation of the new political environment in the country. The two main political parties are preparing to run their campaigns for the presidential election to be held in November.

After his strategy to contest the general election ended in failure, President D.B. Wijetunga found himself in a situation that made it difficult for him to continue as

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chief of his party. Therefore, the United National Party [UNP], in a bid to choose a successor, elected opposition leader Gamini Dissanayake as its new chief as well as its presidential candidate.

Several supporters of Gamini Dissanayake believe he will lead the UNP with new vigor to contest the presidential election. As far as Gamini Dissanayake is concerned, however, there is no doubt that this poses a great challenge for him.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga is going to contest the election against Gamini Dissanayake on behalf of the People's Alliance. It should be noted that Chandrika is going to contest the election under a pledge to eliminate the presidential system.

The two parties have been devising strategies to contest the presidential election on the basis of experience gained from the outcome of the recent general elections. The results of the general elections clearly indicate that in Sri Lanka, which has a two party system, people belonging to minority communities have become the force that determines the next ruling party. Therefore, both parties must take positions that do not earn the displeasure of minority communities.

The support of the Muslim Congress contributed greatly to the success of the People's Alliance in the general elections. Tamil parties have also expressed their support for the People's Alliance.

At the same time, Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga is working to gain the support of people living in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in the north. The new prime minister is understood to nurture a firm belief that if her peace efforts succeed to a certain extent, and an atmosphere is created to hold elections in the north, she can win a large number of votes in that region as well.

Moreover, the Upcountry People's Front [UPF] led by Chandrashekharan will extend its support to the People's Alliance. The People's Alliance leaders have a strong feeling that along with the support of the UPF, if they get the support of Thondaman of the Sri Lanka Worker's Congress [SLWC] their party will achieve a major victory in the presidential election.

As the People's Alliance did not receive an absolute majority in the general elections, Chandrika Kumaratunga's aim is to achieve a major victory in the presidential election and thereby overcome the shortcomings and strengthen her position.

Gamini Dissanayake, who was the leader of a rival party of the UNP a year ago, has been elected as the UNP's leader and presidential candidate. This reflects his ability to win political games. He has grabbed this "lofty" position despite strong opposition and obstacles. Today, the task before him is to invigorate the frustrated UNP cadres and lead the party toward the presidential election with strong determination. This is the only way he can strengthen his position.

Gamini Dissanayake, who understands very well that the parties representing minority communities are the political force that will determine the success or defeat of his party in the presidential election, is expected to devise his election strategy with the aim of winning the support of these parties.

The most important task before the UNP is to strengthen and consolidate its ties with the SLWC, which saved the party from a humiliating defeat in the general elections. The UNP managed to gain a foothold in the central upcountry regions only because of the following statement by Thondaman: Let us show our gratitude to the UNP, which gave us the right of franchise, by voting in its favor.

The shift in the SLWC's stance after the general elections is a source of apprehension for the UNP. Because Gamini Dissanayake is close to Thondaman, a section of UNP cadres believes that Dissanayake's leadership will help maintain good relations with the SLWC. Gamini Dissanayake is running his presidential election campaign based on this confidence.

Earlier, however, the UNP was insistent on winding up the presidential system even before the election. Gamini Dissanayake wanted to avoid another defeat. The UNP election manifesto states that the party stands for the continuation of the presidential system, but Gamini Dissanayake nevertheless announced his support for the People's Alliance in eliminating the presidential system. He made the decision to avoid another election defeat.

The People's Alliance, which wants to eliminate the presidential system, is not prepared to accept this support right away. It wants to do away with the presidential system only after ascertaining what support it can muster in the presidential election. Success in the presidential election may also help the People's Alliance make certain important decisions.

As far as Gamini Dissanayake is concerned, he says he will not extend his support to eliminating the presidential system if he is elected president. He says he will only extend his suoport to winding up the presidential system if he is defeated in the election. Political considerations are being given preference to principle and ideology.

The stand of the minority political parties is considered very significant in today's political environment, which has undergone substantial change and is heading for further changes. Political observers are minutely analyzing the LTTE's stand against the backdrop of the government's steps to hold talks.

As far as the Tamil organizations are concerned, only three were elected to Parliament in the recent general elections. Of these, the Tamil United Liberation Front [TULF] has been a moderate party since its inception. The other parties are the Eelam People's Democratic

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Party [EPDP] and the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam [PLOTE]. These two parties have now joined the national mainstream after starting out as armed terrorist organizations.

Although there are several contradictions among these organizations, peace through negotiations can be ensured only if they are amenable to some sort of reconciliation.

Forging some sort of reconciliation despite the prevalence of incongruities is the lesson taught to us by democracy. In consonance with this principle, harmonious views on certain issues have be seen recently among these parties.

The TULF has already stated that a solution to the ethnic conflict can be found by holding talks with the LTTE. PLOTE leader D. Siddharthan, who stressed the need for holding talks with the LTTE, has noted that he will not insist on being included in the proposed talks.

EPDP leader Douglas Devananda, in his maiden speech in Parliament, said: We respect the legitimate role of the LTTE in the struggle to realize the political aspirations of the Tamil-speaking people. Douglas Devananda also stated that he welcomes the new government's initiative to hold an extensive and open dialogue with the LTTE as well as other Muslim and Tamil parties to resolve the ethnic conflict.

Meanwhile, the new government's steps to relax the economic embargo and other restrictions imposed by the former government on the people of the north and the LTTE's release of several prisoners of war as a goodwill gesture have created strong hopes in the minds of the people. The history of Sri Lanka tells us, however, that peace can only be ensured after we clear several hurdles.

It can be achieved by forging a broad national political consensus devoid of petty political considerations as well as through strong political leadership. Will it be possible for the new prime minister?

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